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Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 35 of the Convention

Initial report of State party due in 2013

Cyprus*, **

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Introduction

Purpose of the report

1. Cyprus has ratified and incorporated into national legislation, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2011, by the approval of The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Related Issues (Ratification) Law of 2011, L. 8(III)/2011.[1]

2. The present Treaty-Specific Document, together with the Core Document, constitutes the First Report of Cyprus to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, according to article 35 of the Convention.

3. The purpose of this Report is to record and describe under every article of the Convention, the current laws, policies and activities in Cyprus, that satisfy the rights of persons with disabilities and implementing the requirements of the Convention. A parallel purpose is to identify the weaknesses and the gaps that exist in the present situation, in comparison to the desired results that are set by the Convention, in order to design and promote any necessary further actions, through the formulation of the first National Disability Action Plan in Cyprus, starting with the three years period of 2013–2015.

Methodology of the preparation of the Report

4. This Report is the result of a collective effort of the public services, coordinated by the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities that serves as the focal point in Cyprus for the implementation of the Convention, through the following actions:

- Data and information have been collected from all the public services involved with persons with disabilities through their contribution on a specific template document designed to serve this particular cause;
- Discussions and consultations took place, for the content of the Report, with representatives of the public services, representatives of the Cyprus Confederation of Organizations of the Disabled and representatives — observers from the Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights, in meetings of eight Thematic Technical Committees that operated within the responsibilities of the Coordinating Mechanism, to facilitate the promotion of actions on the Convention, during the period February–July 2013;
- Comments and suggestions were taken into account on the content of the Report, which was publicized through the Website of the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (www.mlsi.gov.cy/dsid), for public consultation purposes during the period 9 to 18 July 2013;
- The Report was adopted by the Pancyprian Council for Persons with Disabilities as the Coordinating Mechanism to facilitate the actions of the Convention. The Cyprus Confederation of Organizations of the Disabled, which participates in the Pancyprian Council for Persons with Disabilities, reserved the right to submit its

[1] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities — Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/9EA85834AB487A10C2257A7C002CEDA5/$file/Symbasi%20OHE%20kai%20Prwtokollo.pdf.

own report (Shadow Report) to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Report also includes views of the Ombudsman and Human Rights Commissioner, as the Independent Mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Convention;

- The Report, together with the National Disability Action Plan 2013–2015, was approved by the Council of Ministers on the 26th of July 2013 which authorized their submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

5. For the preparation of the Report, the guidelines of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, together with the guidelines of the annual Work Forums that were organized by the European Union in October of 2010, 2011 and 2012, was also taken into account.

6. The procedure followed for the preparation of the Report, was essentially a learning experience for all the participants, since in every meeting of the Thematic Technical Committees, the sharing of knowledge, the exchange of views, ideas and suggestions and the cultivation of common visions and goals, added value to the knowledge, experience, attitudes and perceptions of the representatives of the public services and the organizations of persons with disabilities.

Disability in Cyprus at a glance

7. In an attempt to facilitate the reader and summarize at a glance the present situation on disability issues in Cyprus, we use below the tool of analysing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis).

Strengths

8. The values of dignity, personal autonomy, freedom of choice and independence lie high in the values level of the Cypriot society. Furthermore, the strong institution of family and the important voluntary active expression of social solidarity empower and support persons with disabilities to enjoy the abovementioned values.

9. A modern and powerful legal framework exists in Cyprus for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, including general and specific laws in every aspect. In Appendix 1, there is a list presenting the main laws (including electronic references) that regulate matters concerning disabilities through 3 ratification laws of International Conventions, 5 general laws and 30 specific laws and regulations. The effort to further improve the legislative framework to ensure more effectively the rights of persons with disabilities is continuous.

10. The institution of consultation with the organizations that represent persons with disabilities in Cyprus is legally regulated, since a specific law obligates every public service to consult the Cyprus Confederation of the Organizations of the Disabled before taking any decision on any matter concerning persons with disabilities.

11. The administrative capacity to manage and promote actions that implement the rights of persons with disabilities has been strengthened significantly, after the establishment and function of the mechanisms responsible for the implementation of the Convention, as described in article 33. As a result of the operation of these mechanisms and the cooperation of all involved parties the first National Disability Action Plan 2013–2015 was developed as a tool to enforce the implementation of the Convention. The Action Plan is presented as Appendix 5.

Weaknesses

12. Despite the positive change that occurred during the last decades in attitudes and perceptions of citizens towards the diversity of people and its acceptance, there is still much room for improvement, in the level of respect by the Cypriot society towards the rights of persons with disabilities.

13. Despite the existence of the powerful legal framework on the regulation of the rights of persons with disabilities, several gaps are observed on the effective implementation of the laws, that can be confronted with more effective planning and cooperation of the public services in order to achieve the materialization of ideas into actions, as well as with tighter supervision of the implementation of laws and the application of penalties where needed.

14. Despite the progress accomplished, during this last decade, concerning access of persons with disabilities to the physical and built environment, significant barriers still exist mainly for persons with motor and visual disabilities, due to inadequate implementation of the law from the local authorities, but also because of ignorance and lack of respect from a large number of citizens.

15. Other sectors where there are areas for improvement are therapeutic rehabilitation, vocational training and employment. The structures and services that provide therapies such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and psychotherapy are limited and multidisciplinary rehabilitation State centres for all disabilities and especially for severe disabilities are not available. In the field of vocational training and employment, systematic mechanisms for the assessment of disability, functioning, vocational needs and abilities for employment of persons with disabilities as well as mechanisms to offer adequate motives for integration in the work force and in occupations on demand, have still not been established.

Opportunities

16. The existence of European structural funds and co-funded programmes have given the opportunity to Cyprus to develop programmes, operated to a greater extent by the public services but also by voluntary organizations, to promote the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities. Examples of good practices are the Motivation Scheme for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Private Sector operated by the Department of Labour, the design for the Implementation of a New System for the Assessment of Disability and Functioning by the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, the Training Programmes for persons with visual disability on abilities concerning independent living by the Pancyprian Organization of the Blind and the Programme for the Establishment of Accessibility Equipment on Main Beaches from the Cyprus Organization of Paraplegic.

Threats

17. As happens in many States at this period of time, the worsening of economic crisis in Cyprus coincided with the period of the ratification and entry into force of the Convention. This report and also the National Disability Action Plan 2013-2015, were prepared in an extremely crucial period for the economy, due to the fact that Cyprus in 2012 had to appeal to the European Support Mechanism requesting financial support and agreeing to a Memorandum of Understanding and the application of financial adjustment programme since March 2013. The development therefore of additional actions for the implementation of the Convention should be within the financial capabilities of the State.

18. The withdrawal of experienced executive public officers, without the possibility of replacing them due to the staffing limitations in the public sector is also a threat for the quality and quantity of public services offered to persons with disabilities.

Reporting under the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Articles 1–4

19. Cyprus acknowledges the importance of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and fully agrees with its aim, its general values and principles and its goals. Cyprus, through the National Reports that will submit to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and through the National Disability Action Plans will promote the rights of persons with disabilities to the larger extent possible. Utilizing the mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the Convention as they are described under article 33 and by actively involving the representative organizations of persons with disabilities the Government approved the first National Disability Action Plan 2013-2015 as presented in Appendix 5.

20. The definition of disability according to the general disability law being the Persons with Disabilities Laws 2000–2007[2] reports that "disability" has the meaning of any form of inadequacy or impairment which causes permanent or for an unspecified duration of time physical, intellectual or mental restriction to the person, and taking into account the history and other personal data of the individual, reduces significantly or excludes the possibility of execution of one or more activities or functions that are considered normal and significant for the quality of life of every person of the same age who does not experience the same inadequacy or impairment. The abovementioned definition is generally used where other specific definitions of disability do not exist. It is noteworthy that in other specific laws or schemes concerning persons with disabilities, it is possible that other definitions may be used, which respond to the purpose and criteria of those laws and schemes more effectively.

21. In order to comply with the equal treatment of persons with disabilities it is important to implement "reasonable adjustments". The definition of "reasonable adjustments" is presented through the Persons with Disabilities Laws, in the field of employment as "specified measures, according to the needs present in a given situation so as the person with disability to have access in work position., to exercise their profession, to be promoted or to receive training, as long as these actions do not result in a disproportionate burden for the employer" and also in the field of the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities as "reasonable measures that are implemented to the extent that the local financial and other conditions allow it".

22. According to statistical data from the Labour Force Survey 2002 — section for People with Long-term Health Problems or Disabilities, 12.2 per cent of the population aged between 16-64 years stated that they face a long-term health problem or disability. Additionally, in terms of people who claim to have a long-term health problem or disability, 8.6 per cent of the problems are due to congenital factors or caused during childbirth, 3.4 per cent due to work accidents, 4.2 per cent to road accidents or injury not related to work, 2.6 per cent from accident / injury at home during leisure or sporting activities, 4.4 per cent from occupational diseases, 74.8 per cent from diseases not work-related and 2.1 per cent from unknown aetiology. As shown by the statistical data the majority of long-term health problems or disabilities are not due to diseases related to the employment of the individual.

[2] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities — Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd32_gr/dsipd32_gr?OpenDocument.

23. According to the European Health Survey 2008,[3] 117,732 persons or 18.1 per cent of the population aged over 15 years, stated that they have activity limitations due to health problems in the last six months or more. 6.2 per cent of them indicated significant limitation and 11.9 per cent reduction of some extent.

24. The same survey showed that over 50.8 per cent of the population aged 15 + are wearing glasses or contact lenses due to vision problems and 0.1 per cent have total vision loss. In addition, 6.5 per cent of the population aged 15 + with the exception of those who have complete loss of vision, stated that they have some difficulty reading letters from a newspaper, while 4.1 per cent declared that they have some difficulty in observing the face of someone in a distance of 4 meters. Concerning the hearing ability, 1.8 per cent of the population aged 15 + said they wear hearing aids, while 0.1 per cent of the population claimed to not listen at all. Furthermore, 5.6 per cent of the population aged 15 + with the exception of those who have complete loss of hearing, stated that they have some difficulty to hear what is said in a conversation with other people. For mobility, it was presented that 3 per cent of the population aged 15 + is not able to walk 500 meters, 3.9 per cent cannot ascend / descend stairs, 5 per cent are unable to crouch or kneel, 3.9 per cent cannot carry a weight of 5 kg and 0.5 per cent are unable to use their fingers for obtaining objects.

25. According to statistical data obtained from the Section "Employment of persons with disabilities" of the Labour Force Survey 2011,[4] up to 20.6 per cent of employees reported that they face a serious long term health problem or chronic disease (males 22.4 per cent, females 18.16 per cent). The corresponding rate among the population that is not employed is up to 30.9 per cent (males 30.2 per cent, females 31.3 per cent).

26. The statistical tables of the abovementioned surveys of the Cyprus Statistical Services are presented in Appendix 3.

Article 5 – Equality and non-discrimination

27. According to the Law Against Racial and Other Discriminations[5] the Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights undertook the responsibility, inter alia, for combating and eliminating indirect or direct discrimination including discrimination based on disability. The responsibilities of the Ombudsman under the provisions of this law, (i.e. as the Equality and Non-discrimination Authority) include the promotion of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, the implementation of measures and monitoring / enforcing of compliance using measures or by imposing cash penalties for the practical application of relevant, effective, laws and regulations in cases of violation or discrimination. These responsibilities apply in relation to any discriminatory act, treatment, behaviour, layout, condition, criterion or practice prohibited by law which is detected / denounced within the activities of the public or private sector. Forbidden by law discrimination may relate to social protection, social security or healthcare, education, access to goods and services or housing, while, regarding employment and occupation, it may cover the terms of access,

[3] European Health Survey – Cyprus Statistical Services- http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/All/C80AD38EAA44F2C3C22577DF00321134/$file/EU_HEALTH_SURVEY_2008-181110.pdf?OpenElement.

[4] Labor Force Survey 2011 – Cyprus Statistical Services- http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/All/50A7DDCE5922065AC2257B6A002F6D38/$file/LFS-2011-060912.pdf?OpenElement.

[5] Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights- http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/Ombudsman.nsf/All/341F06F0809843A6C22575B200444BBB/$file/Καταπολέμησης%20των%20Φυλετικών%20και%20Ορισμένων%20Άλλων%20Διακρίσεων%20(Επίτροπος)%20Νόμος%20του%202004.pdf?OpenElement.

recruitment and promotion, selection criteria at work, vocational guidance or vocational training, working conditions and terms of employment and redundancy payment.

28. Assurance of equal treatment of persons with disabilities are also offered by the Persons with Disabilities Law of 2000–2007,[6] The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Related Issues (Ratification) Law of 2011, the Equal Treatment in Employment and Work Law of 2004[7] and the Ombudsman Laws[8] that underlie the operation of the institution.

29. Statistical data[9] from the Ombudsman's Office show that the number of complaints people have made during the years 2004–2012 were as follows: 2004: 4, 2005: 14, 2006: 21, 2007: 42, 2008: 19, 2009: 17, 2010: 28, 2011: 25, 2012: 25.

30. According to the Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights the weaknesses observed in maintaining the principle of equality and in implementing the Convention accurately, concern the long lasting or inadequate regulatory, administrative and bureaucratic procedures on behalf of the State in the development, implementation and monitoring of effective and integrated policies and actions (including positive actions) as well as the inadequate respond of involved public and private agencies during the exercise of the Ombudsman's duties. At the Ombudsman opinion inadequate knowledge for disability issues, limited education on human rights both in the public and the private sector as well as the lack of a culture towards the social model of disability, make the ensuring of persons with disabilities rights difficult especially under the present economic circumstances which widen inequality and make the position of persons with disabilities even more vulnerable.

31. The **Ministry of Justice and Public Order** is directly involved with equality and non-discrimination and some of its responsibilities involve monitoring and modernizing of the fields of justice under its responsibility, especially laws about justice, procedural law, criminal law, instruments on the treatment of offenders, sectors of civil law, administrative law and laws concerning human rights, the study and promotion of legal and administrative measures for the smooth functioning of justice and courts, the study of Cyprus accession to multilateral agreements, the study and promotion of issues concerning human rights and the monitoring of functioning of State Prisons.

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[6] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance-
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/All/93E0AC1BD61BE111C2257AA10047A3BF?OpenDocument.

[7] Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights-
http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/Ombudsman.nsf/All/D31E3418AE7016D8C22575B200442BEE/$file/Ισης%20Μεταχείρισης%20στην%20Απασχόληση%20και%20την%20Εργασία%20Νόμοι%20του%202004%20έως%202009.pdf?OpenElement.

[8] Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights-
http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/Ombudsman.nsf/All/4C8D8386F1767914C22575B200438176/$file/%CE%95%CF%80%CE%B9%CF%84%CF%81%CF%8C%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%85%20%CE%94%CE%B9%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%83%CE%B5%CF%89%CF%82%20%CE%9D%CF%8C%CE%BC%CE%BF%CE%B9%20%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%201991%20%CE%AD%CF%89%CF%82%202011.pdf?OpenElement.

[9] Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights
http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/ombudsman.nsf/index_gr/index_gr?OpenDocument

Article 6 – Women with disabilities

32. In Cyprus efforts of mainstreaming the principle of equal treatment between men and women in all policies are continuous. Article 28 of the Constitution grounds the value of equality before the law, administration and justice and the right of equal protection and treatment in order for everyone to enjoy their rights and freedoms without direct or indirect discrimination on a gender[10] basis among others. Laws that enshrine the principle of equal treatment of genders at national level, include the "Equal Rewards between men and women when exercising the same occupation or a same value occupation Law of 2002 to 2009,[11] the Equal Treatment between men and women (Accessibility to Goods and Services) Law of 2008, the Equal Treatment between men and women in Employment and Vocational Training Law of 2002 to 2009[12] and the Protection of Maternity Law of 1997–2011.[13] The responsibility for the implementation and supervision of these laws is under the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance whereas according to their provisions, judicial protection is provided, by the Industrial Disputes Tribunals and extrajudicial protection from the Ombudsman and Human Rights Office. Women with disabilities are taken into consideration in the implementation of all laws concerning equal treatment.

Article 7 – Children with disabilities

33. Cyprus ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in December 1990, by the approval of the Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ratification) Law of 1990. According to the abovementioned Convention[14] children are considered the persons under the age of 18, despite of their colour, language, religion, political and cultural beliefs, or of those of their parents, their national or social origin, financial condition, disability and their birth or the birth of their parents. The Convention constitutes a common framework on the rights of the child, including children with disabilities. The Government is working towards the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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[10] Ministry of Social Affairs – Cyprus Republic Constitution
http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/constitution_gr/constitution_gr#2

[11] Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights
http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/Ombudsman.nsf/All/6F756C69A731BFCAC22575B20043F898/$file/%CE%8A%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%82%20%CE%9C%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%B1%CF%87%CE%B5%CE%AF%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%82%20%CE%91%CE%BD%CE%B4%CF%81%CE%8E%CE%BD%20%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9%20%CE%93%CF%85%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8E%CE%BD%20%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD%20%CE%91%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%83%CF%87%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B7%20%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9%20%CE%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD%20%CE%95%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%B3%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AF%20%CE%95%CE%BA%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%AF%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%85%CF%83%CE%B7%20%CE%9D%CF%8C%CE%BC%CE%BF%CE%B9%20%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%202002%20%CE%AD%CF%89%CF%82%202009.pdf?OpenElement.

[12] Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights
http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/ombudsman.nsf/legislation_gr/legislation_gr?OpenDocument.

[13] Department of Labor – Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance-
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/dl.nsf/All/50A46FB1FAA4E6A0C225732B0035E81A/$file/Οι%20Περι%20Προστασιας%20της%20Μητρότητας%20Νόμοι%20(ενοποιημένο%20κείμενο%201997-2011).pdf?OpenElement.

[14] Office of the Ombudsman for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
http://www.childcom.org.cy/ccr/ccr.nsf/All/EC4B08A25498EE64C2257463002670A7/$file/CRC_greek.pdf.

34. The **Ombudsman for the Protection of the Rights of the Child** establishes three year Action Schemes which include (a) the monitoring of laws, procedures and practices, (b) awareness raising of children in particular and society in general on the rights of children with disabilities, (c) the empowerment and participation of children and (d) the representation of children and their interests in procedures that affect them.[15] All actions that are decided and concern all the aspects of the life of the person, not only for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child but also for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, take into consideration the child with the disability and their age.

35. After a decision of the Council of Ministers, in 2001 the Coordinating Service of Early Childhood Intervention was established, under the monitoring of the Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Mental Retardation, being a consultative committee of public law, that addresses preschool children (under the age of 6) who face developmental disabilities or disorders. The Service supports and guides families on how to use the services available to them, which enhance the development of the child in fields such as speech, perception and self-care.

36. The **Ministry of Education and Culture** ensures that all children have the right to education in Public Schools of their neighbourhood, enjoying all the rights and fundamental freedoms as other children of their age. Children with disabilities / special needs have the right and are urged to express their opinion freely to the educators, schools assistants, educational psychologists and the administration of the school on matters concerning the educational and vocational training programme.

37. The **Cyprus Youth Organization** is a public legal entity. Through the management of the European programme "Youth in Action", actions of groups in which persons with disabilities participate are encouraged. These actions are financed through grants and include voluntarism, the exchange of young people between European Union countries and the empowerment of the initiatives of young people (financial aid for educational, leisure and other activities).

Article 8 – Awareness raising

38. **In public schools of Primary and Secondary Education**, "Health Education Programmes" have been established and are considered to be the most appropriate preventive process in education on issues related to diversity of persons with disabilities. Specifically, the Health Education Programmes, amongst others, aim to raise awareness, change attitudes and behaviours, combat stereotypes and prejudices, reinforce non-discrimination / equality, acceptance, promotion of a healthy reaction to diversity, justice, respect for human rights, motivation of students to support and provide facilities for persons with disabilities with the purpose of an all-round development, full and equal participation in education and full social integration.

39. Actions concerning enlightenment and awareness raising, in the form of leaflets, learning activities and workshops are also conducted by the mechanisms responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, namely, the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and the Office of Ombudsman and Human Rights — Equality Authority, either on their own or in collaboration with the Cyprus Confederation

[15] Επίτροπος Προστασίας των Δικαιωμάτων του Παιδιού – Ετήσια Έκθεση 2011 – http://www.childcom.org.cy/ccr/ccr.nsf/All/4CD46B8B7C714012C2257AD800339C0D/$file/ANNUAL%20REPORT%202011%20final.pdf

of Organizations of the Disabled. A large number of events to raise awareness about disability, especially annual events for each type of disability, are also carried out by voluntary organizations.

Article 9 – Accessibility

Access to the Physical and Built Environment

40. Despite the significant progress achieved in the last decade regarding access of persons with disabilities to the physical and built environment, there are still significant obstacles mainly for individuals with motor and visual disabilities, due to inadequate enforcement of legislation on accessibility by the relevant local authorities, but also because of ignorance and lack of respect from a large number of citizens.

41. **Technical Services of the Ministry of Interior** are the body responsible for ensuring the proper legal framework within which buildings are built, restored or modified in order to be accessible and safe for persons with disabilities.

42. The existing legal framework which ensures access of persons with disabilities to the built environment is the Streets and Buildings Law — Chapter 96 and Regulations (Regulation 61 H).[16]

43. Presently, the Government is in the process of revising Regulation 61 H, under which the **Approved Document on Accessibility and Safety Use** will be approved. This document forms the basis on which the planner, as defined in the Regulation of Streets and Buildings Law, will perform road and building designs that ensure safe access and use by all persons, including persons with disabilities.

44. The changes in the legal framework that are proposed by the above document aim at upgrading the requirements in the design of roads and buildings. It also facilitates the construction authorities in implementing the construction control. Weakness is observed in implementation of the provisions of Regulation 61 H for buildings that were constructed prior to 1999, year of which the Regulation was entered into force.

45. The legal framework for swimming pools of the Ministry of Interior which is in the drafting process contains a Chapter concerning facilities for persons with disabilities.

46. **The Department of Town Planning and Housing** of the Ministry of Interior is responsible for imposing conditions on the Planning Permissions granted, for applying the requirements for the development of parking spaces for persons with disabilities. Moreover, it has the responsibility to ensure that refugee houses meet the requirements of the Streets and Buildings Regulations for use by disabled persons and that urban projects are accessible to people with disabilities.

47. During the issue stage of the building permit, the **competent local building authorities** ensure that the documents submitted for consideration of the license comply with the provisions of Regulation 61 H. At the stage of issuing certificates of approval, the competent authorities consider if non-implementation of these provisions endangers the users of the building and issue a certificate of non- authorized work.

[16] Design Bureau for the Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Communication and Works-
http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dbpd/disabledaccess.nsf/All/3BC82DF3DA86360BC22572A6004A620D

48. Regarding urban streets, the **Department of Public Works** of the Ministry of Communications and Works, has prepared standard designs for the construction of accessible ramps for persons with disabilities which are applied to all public city streets / sidewalks. Along the sidewalks a route leading persons with visual disabilities is applied and at controlled pedestrian crossings appropriate sound signals for the safe handling / crossing of pedestrians with vision problems are put. In roadside parking, parking spaces exclusively for persons with disabilities are provided. The above apply to all new projects while at existing roads the necessary construction work is being done, gradually, in order to transform them into accessible roads for persons with disabilities.

49. In addition, the Public Works Department has the responsibility of designing or assigning the design of government buildings and monitoring their maintenance. Furthermore, the Department provides their expert opinion on buildings being rented from government services. It ensures that new buildings meet the legislation for persons with disabilities. For existing buildings, adjustments are made to provide facilities for persons with disabilities. For rented buildings the need to provide facilities for people with disabilities is indicated to government departments, and suggestions are provided on how to do so. With the purpose of further implementation of article 9 of the Convention, the Thematic Technical Committee on Accessibility is in the process of a survey of fulfilment of accessibility standards in all buildings of the public sector.

50. In relation to marine works, the Department of Public Works, as a Technical Advisor to the Department of Fisheries and Marine Survey on issues of fishing shelters, ensures that the new fishing shelters and / or upgrades to existing shelters are constructed, so as to create access / facilities in order to attend the needs of persons with disabilities. Gaining access to the beach is not the responsibility of the Department of Public Works, but the Department of Town Planning and Housing, under the general planning of the coastal front. The Public Works Department provides, where requested, technical advice on the access design.

51. **The Design Office for Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Communications and Works,** has generally an advisory role in respect of decisions / interventions of State departments and local administrations on accessibility for persons with disabilities in public buildings and sidewalks. The Office tries to intervene instantly in order to correct specifications to be adopted / complied. It also operates as a link between persons with disabilities (organizations and individual cases) and Services of the State, so that the handling of accessibility issues can be immediate and effective.

52. Although the Office's role is advisory, continuous cooperation with both the Public Works Department and the Technical Services of Local Administration has managed to elevate the Principle of Accessibility as a necessary condition both during the phase of planning and at the stage of monitoring the implementation of the standards. The Office also cooperates with the Association of Municipalities for proper application of the Rule 61.H so as the control of plans include not only the main entrances of buildings but also entrances of shops on the ground floor.

53. Furthermore, the Office coordinates the operation of a number of Committees such as the Technical Committee for Accessibility of the Ministry of Communications and Works on the issuing of accessibility certificates to European co-funded projects, the Technical Committee on the accessibility of pavements in cooperation with the Department of Public Works and the Technical Committee on the accessibility of beaches.

54. The strengthening of the organization and staffing of the Design Office is necessary.

55. **Technical Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture** are responsible for ensuring that all necessary infrastructure and equipment are present in the public schools of Cyprus. Infrastructure and equipment includes buildings, furniture, equipment and outdoor

facilities inside the school premises. Technical Services apply the ***Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Regulations of 2001***[17] in all public school buildings including kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, technical schools and special schools.

56. In the case of construction of new schools, Technical Services estimate that, among the costs for projects that are usually part of a larger construction project for the school, about €85,000 is the cost for accessibility projects such as lifts, toilets, corridors and ramps.

57. To address any deficiencies in the existing schools on access for persons with disabilities works include amongst others supply and installation of lifts, ramps and construction of toilets for persons with mobility problems, the reconstruction of external floor area for use by individuals with disabilities and building of adequate parking.

58. In all schools it is considered that the necessary access infrastructure has been set. During the decade 1990-2000 a temporary infrastructure was constructed to meet immediate needs, which is gradually upgraded when new projects are undertaken.

59. All State higher education institutions have the appropriate infrastructure to serve the needs of all students and ensure that all buildings are accessible to persons with disabilities.

60. The **Department of Labour Inspection** of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance in the framework of its responsibilities inspects workplaces where persons with disabilities work or visit, in accordance with the provisions of the *Minimum Requirements for Safety and Health at Work Regulations 2002 to 2004*.[18] Each employer must ensure that workplaces are organized in order to take account, where appropriate, the needs of persons with disabilities in the work environment. This provision applies in particular to the doors, passageways, staircases, bathrooms (shower), washbasins, lavatories and workstations used or occupied directly by persons with disabilities.

61. **The Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO)**, a public legal entity, approves architectural plans of Hotel Enterprises which provide an infrastructure for persons with disabilities in the context of the *Hotels and Tourist Accommodation Regulations 1985-2005 — Regulation 47A — Facilities for persons with disabilities*.[19] Additionally, it provides a subsidy for the creation of specific lanes to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities to the areas of the beach and maintains a list of hotel companies that provide facilities for persons with disabilities. Also, they have published the Technical Guide[20]

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[17] **The Education and Training for Children with Special Needs Regulations of 2001**, 186/2001 Part IX (BUILDING SPECIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS)– Ministry of Education and Culture-
http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/nomothesia/Kanonismoi_KDP_186_%202001.pdf.

[18] Department of Labour Inspection – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance-
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dli/dli.nsf/All/292E937D17A4E043C22576F2002611E2/$file/Peri%20Asfaleias%20kai%20Ygeias%20Nomoi%201996-2011-ENOPOIISI.pdf
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dli/dli.nsf/All/D9CA728A82D3FD4FC2256F3C003D5117/$file/KDP%20494_2004.pdf.

[19] Cyprus Tourism Organisation
http://www.visitcyprus.com/media/b2b_gr/Tourism_Services/Accommodation/Oi_peri_Xenodoxeion_kai_Touristikon_Katalymaton_Genikoi_Kanonismoi_tou_1985_kai_tou_2005.pdf.

[20] Standards / Guide for Persons with Disabilities – Cyprus Tourism Organisation-
http://www.visitcyprus.biz/wps/portal/b2b/!ut/p/c5/hc0xD4IwFATgn_SOtrY41gBCDBBLUGQhHYiplEXAw_n6rLjqA741f7o5a8j_ahzvbu5tGe6WGWtnFidZVJhi2O3CwpJl630cMgPfTl4eF2oCtTeCNSllZs590GdVezaHKuZQBxIqOrz3ZYeY0Pj7TH6plf8vecz_5EFFOg093YYGLruIJ9lLCRE!/dl3/d3/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS9ZQnZ3LzZfRUZBQVNJNDIwT05GNDAyVFVQMjk5VjMwNjY!/?WCM_GLOB

containing technical specifications, criteria and best practices for premises that wish to improve or expand their infrastructure and provide the "Accessible Cyprus" leaflet which includes a wide range of information for persons with disabilities. A web portal has been created in the Organization for accessible tourism at www.visitcyprus.com.

62. CTO participates in the European project that highlights "great destinations in EDEN" the theme of which in 2013 concerns the "European Destination of Excellence-Accessible Tourism" and has submitted a proposal for the European Project — " European Excellence Award-For Accessible Tourism". Also CTO provides services to individuals with disabilities through the creation of abstract hotel structures as mandatory building activities as part of the scheme of incentive plans for sustainable investments, enrichment and upgrading of the tourism product[21] and creating rooms for persons with disabilities in the list of projects to upgrade the hotel business for which free building factor may be granted.

63. According to CTO opinion, the general facilities available in tourist areas to accommodate persons with disabilities are in need of serious improvement due to deficiencies found in transport — buses, taxis and the wider infrastructure — as well as public buildings, parking spaces, parks, public toilets, access to archaeological sites, access to the beach, public squares and suitable sidewalks. The incomplete chain of accessibility and lack of adequate and accurate information distribution is a serious impediment to the fulfilling of the rights of tourists with disabilities.

Access to transport

64. The Persons with Disabilities Laws, 2000–2007, article 7 provide for the handling and transport of persons with disabilities by public transport. Public transport means are required to meet the technical specifications and technical requirements set out in the Bus and Coach Decree 2003, issued by virtue of the Type Approval Vehicle Laws of 2000 and 2002,[22] as they have been replaced by the Type Approval Vehicle Law of 2005[23] concerning the entry and transportation of persons with disabilities.

65. The **Department of Road Transport** provides services to persons with disabilities in relation to obtaining a driving license based on the *Driving License Law of 2001 to 2012 (L.94 (I) / 2001[24]), articles 32-39* and registering motor vehicles based on the *Motor Vehicle and Traffic Law of 1972 to 2012 (Law 86/1972), Annex I, Part I, paragraph 7 (1).*[25]

AL_CONTEXT=/b2b_greek__el/b2b/generic/protypa_odigos_gia_atoma_me_anapiries?contentIDR=f56d910047276888a890b874f712794b&useDefaultText=1&useDefaultDesc=0.

21 Cypriot Tourism Organisation
http://www.visitcyprus.com/media/b2b_gr/Incentives/Sxedio_Kinitron_Enimerotiko_Gr.pdf.

22 Department of Road Transport – Ministry of Communication and Works-
http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/RTD/rtd.nsf/All/8BA7EA48D9943F0AC225788D001CF960/$file/CY_SVA_Regulations_as_Published_PI_773_2003.pdf?Openelement.

23 Department of Road Transport – Ministry of Communication and Works-
http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/RTD/rtd.nsf/All/278CDA2CD3A85808C225788D001EDC5F/$file/Type_Approval_N61_I_2005_160605.pdf?Openelement.

24 Department of Road Transport – Ministry of Communication and Works-
http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/RTD/rtd.nsf/All/48440FE4678BEBABC22578C50035CC8D/$file/N94(I)2001.pdf?Openelement.

25 Department of Road Transport – Ministry of Communication and Works
http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/rtd/rtd.nsf/All/3E86D96E9921981DC2257824004BEB7B/$file/ΠΕΡΙ%20ΜΗΧΑΝΟΚΙΝΗΤΩΝ%20ΟΧΗΜΑΤΩΝ%20ΚΑΙ%20ΤΡΟΧΑΙΑΣ%20ΚΙΝΗΣΕΩΣ%20ΝΟΜΟΣ%20ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΣ%202012.pdf?Openelement.

Exempts from registration fees persons with disabilities who are the beneficiaries of the grant scheme for cars for disabled.

66. Moreover, The accessibility to the Occupation of Road Transporter Laws 2001 and 2011[26] forms the basis for the conclusion and monitoring of the Contracts of Concession of the Public Service for Interior Road Passenger Transport in regular lines by geographic region signed by the Department with six operating companies. The contracts provide for the supply to the public on an ongoing basis and non-discriminatory public domestic road passenger transport liner with fare per passenger at a predetermined frequency, route and stops.

67. In urban routes, Nicosia has 80 low-floor, fully accessible buses, 70 in Limassol, 40 in Paphos and 30 in Famagusta. Larnaca has accessible buses on the main route of No. 30 (Dhekelia, Foinikoudes) and 2 accessible buses, launched following a telephone request of the passenger. The Intercity buses do not have accessible buses. However, they have committed to the implementation of personalized transport service (customized service).

68. In rural areas, according to the provisions of the Contracts, the buses were obligated until 31/12/2011 to be equipped with a manual / automatic ramp. Where this was not possible to be implemented, the Contractor companies apply the personalized transportation service (customized service). This service offers the passenger with a disability the opportunity to be served with fully accessible buses, upon a call request. The service is implemented efficiently in Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca. Because, persons were not adequately informed about the abovementioned service the Department of Road Transport will inform the Contractor companies in order to advertise their service to stakeholders.

69. The buses of the Contractor companies have visual information regarding the route and bus stops. The Convention requires the provision of audio information until 31/12/2013. The Contractor when requested is obliged to inform passengers within 72 hours, about the routes and bus stop in the Braille language. Buses obtain a sign saying "Please give priority to passengers with reduced mobility." The driver is required to provide every possible assistance to passengers. The Contractor Companies implement training programmes for their staff on the Code of Practice and Ethics and maintain a Complaint Management System.

70. Concerning the maximum age of vehicles in the Contracts, there are specific timelines for the renewal of the vehicle fleet of the Contractor and each vehicle in the fleet from 1/1/2011 onwards, must be renewed. Efforts are made by The Road Transport Department to implement the agreed timescales. However, because of the financial situation of the State, the schedules cannot be strictly followed.

71. Concerning the accessible taxis, the Road Transport Department has granted 10 licenses in urban taxis and one in a rural taxi.

72. The Guide to Accessible buses — Instructions to drivers and passengers with disabilities — Edition of the Design Bureau for Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Communications and Works,[27] there is an extensive chapter describing a code of conduct for the correct service of persons with disabilities, in order that drivers of low-floor buses know the specifics passengers with disabilities and how their own behaviour, concerning road transportation but also their own approach, is a very important factor for the integration of people with disabilities in everyday life.

[26] Department of Road Transport – Ministry of Communication and Works- http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/rtd/rtd.nsf/rtd61_gr/rtd61_gr?OpenDocument.

[27] The Design Bureau for Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Communications and Works http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dbpd/disabledaccess.nsf/index/index?opendocument.

Private Vehicles

73. Despite the improvement in the public means of road transport, many persons with disabilities in Cyprus, as well as non-disabled persons prefer to travel by a private car. For the enablement of a car purchase **the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** operates the Scheme for the Allowance of the Provision of a Disability Car[28] which until 2011 was provided by the **Grants and Benefits Service of the Ministry of Finance.** According to the scheme beneficiaries are persons aged between 18-70 years and present severe disabilities in the upper and / or lower limbs, or severe visual disability. In 2011, the cost for the operation of this plan amounted to €1,609,347 for 186 beneficiaries. Until the end of 2012, the financial assistance provided per car amounted up to €15,378 or €18,795 and included the duties, excise taxes and VAT of the purchased car. In 2013 modification and simplification of the Scheme was initiated, due to restricting of the available funds for the operation of the scheme.

74. For the facilitation of parking for persons with disabilities, in Cyprus the institution of the Blue European Parking Card exists. **The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** issues the Parking Card[29] to beneficiaries who meet the criteria of the Persons with Disabilities Laws from 2000 to 2007. Until today a parking card has been issued to around 3,500 people nationwide.

75. In 2012, 1,452 denouncements were made by the police for illegal parking of vehicles in parking areas for persons with disabilities and 2,460 denouncements about illegal parking of vehicles on sidewalks, in all areas of Cyprus.

76. A new legal instrument for the protection of parking places for persons with disabilities (public and private) from illegal use by non-beneficiaries is in the process of drafting.

Air Transportation

77. **The Civil Aviation Department** of the Ministry of Communications and Works is the National Enforcement Body of the European Regulation EC 1107/2006[30] on the rights of persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility when traveling by air.

78. This Department informs on the application of EU Regulation 1107/2006 concerning the rights of persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility when traveling by air and is handling complaints from persons with reduced mobility or their disability organizations, on their behalf. Also, it informs and collaborates with Cyprus Airways and the Administrator Contractor of airports in Larnaca and Paphos, Hermes Airports Ltd, for passenger complaints or issues regarding the practical application of regulations in accordance with the *Regulations 287/2008*[31] *(Implementing Measures for Regulation (EU) No. 1107 / 2006.*

79. A person with reduced mobility has the right to address the Civil Aviation Department if he / she believes that the operator or the airport managing body has not met

[28] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd15_gr/dsipd15_gr?OpenDocument.

[29] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd18_gr/dsipd18_gr?OpenDocument.

[30] Civil Aviation Department – Ministry of Communication and Works http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/DCA/DCA.nsf/All/FB3414EF20F4E448C2257A77004C8EE7/$file/KANONIΣMOΣ%20(EK)%2011072006.pdf?OpenElement.

[31] Civil Aviation Department – Ministry of Communication and Works http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dca/dca.nsf/DMI.consumer_gr/DMI.consumer_gr?OpenDocument.

their rights in accordance to the Regulation. The written complaint shall be examined and if necessary, the responsible agency will be asked to answer in writing. All stakeholders are informed about the result of the Civil Aviation Department. In case of violation of the Regulation and of article 243 (administrative breaches) of L.213/2002 of the Civil Aviation Law,[32] the Civil Aviation Department may under article 245 (administrative penalties) impose an administrative fine not exceeding €8.600 or 10 per cent of the annual turnover of the business.

Marine Transport

80. *Chapter II of Regulation (EU) No. 1177/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council that met on 24 November 2010 concerning the rights of passengers when traveling by sea and inland waterway and the amending Regulation (EU) No. 2006/2004* refers to "Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Reduced Mobility." Specifically establishes rules to maritime and inland waterway transport on non-discrimination and assistance to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility.

81. The **Department of Merchant Shipping** is currently expected to undertake the obligations of this Regulation in relation, inter alia, with the national body that receives complaints of passengers in relation to terminal operators.

82. **The Cyprus Ports Authority** as a terminal operator, has already implemented its obligations under Regulation (EU) No. 1177/2010. Specifically facilities are provided for persons with disabilities or reduced mobility in association with the parking for persons with disabilities, wheelchairs, ramps for wheelchair access, toilets for persons with disabilities and the broadcast of audio messages within the passenger terminal. Officers who are responsible for the movement of persons in passenger areas have received training on handling wheelchairs and first aid.

83. The on Coastal and other Passenger Boat Regulations of 2012 (R.278/2012)[33] apply to Cypriot passenger ferry boats and passenger ferry ships flying the flag of another Member State or another third country, if they are in the territory of Cyprus. Under Rule 11, the vessels must have provisions for safe boarding and disembarkation of persons with disabilities in accordance with the specifications set out in the Annex to the Regulation. Also Regulation 24 (11) provides that passenger areas, including toilets, shall be arranged so as to facilitate the movement of persons with disabilities in accordance with the specifications set out in the Annex to the Regulation. In cases where vessels are practically unenforceable shall be granted a certificate of exemption. These vessels will be prominently marked with the sign "THE BOAT IS NOT DESIGNED TO PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES / THIS VESSEL IS NOT CONSTRUCTED TO PROVIDE FACILITIES TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES" (Regulation 17 (1) (c). From the provision of facilities for persons with disabilities new vessels of 24 meters or more and vessels 20 meters and over who are shipwright on or after the entry into force of these Regulations (July 2012) are not exempted.

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[32] Civil Aviation Department – Ministry of Communication and Works http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/DCA/DCA.nsf/All/27826EE6254E25ACC225737C002C8306/$file/1_%CE%A0%CE%95%CE%A1%CE%99%20%CE%A0%CE%9F%CE%9B%CE%99%CE%A4%CE%99%CE%9A%CE%97%CE%A3%20%CE%91%CE%95%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%A0%CE%9F%CE%A1%CE%99%CE%91%CE%A3%20%CE%9D%CE%9F%CE%9C%CE%9F%CE%A3%20%20-%20N.213%281%292002.pdf?OpenElement.

[33] Department of Merchant Shipping – Ministry of Communication and Works- http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dms/dms.nsf/3acf710d541a3e29c2257500004c21df/622f384d97b7d79dc2257a4b0032edb7?OpenDocument.

84. The Department of Merchant Shipping has been designated as the competent authority for the implementation, enforcement and monitoring of compliance to the Regulations PI 278 of 2010 those involved. Vessels are subject to an initial inspection (before the vessel is used for the first time), to periodic and unscheduled inspections (without notice) to determine that the requirements of the Regulations are being met and relevant safety certificates are issued. The security certificate is valid for one year and may be renewed before the end of the following periodic inspection that will be conducted in order to verify continuing compliance with the Regulations. In case of non-compliance remedial measures are required. If during an extraordinary inspection, the vessel is proved unseaworthy, the Ship Surveyor has the power to suspend the validity of security certificates or to cancel and detain the ship form traveling.

Access to information

85. **The Department of Information Technology Services** of the Ministry of Finance is the competent government body on matters relating to the promotion and implementation of IT and e-Governance in the Public Sector as well as the design and development of the Websites of the Public Service (Ministries / Departments / Services), including the Internet portal of Cyprus. DITS provides through web sites and electronic services access to information for persons with disabilities.

86. Aiming the accessibility of the Information Society for all population groups, DITS has already begun the process of converting the Sites of the Public System and the Online Systems based on the Web content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, level AA (WCAG 2.0 Level AA), thereby reducing to a minimum the "digital exclusion", of persons with disabilities.

87. Today there are 185 Sites of the Public Service on the Internet, about 30 per cent have already been converted to comply with the Internet Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, level AA (WCAG 2.0 Level AA), while the rest are in the conversion process. The Department mainly cooperates with persons with visual disabilities (members of the Pancyprian Organization of Blind). This Organization has contributed to quality control of the new portal of Cyprus. The aim of the Department is to create a channel of communication and collaboration with organizations (members of Cyprus Confederation of Organization of the Disabled) in order for them to be involved in the planning and control of a Web Based Information System and Applications.

88. The Action Plan on e-Government 2011–2015 (e-Government Action Plan)[34] will help public authorities to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide better services at lower costs, facilitating and improving the lives of citizens and businesses.

89. However, DITS identifies weaknesses concerning legal matters and the lack of specific legislation regulating electronic accessibility.

90. **The Department of Electronic Communications** of the Ministry of Communications and Works has been designated as the executive arm to formulate and implement a comprehensive national strategy for the Information Society. As part of the Digital Strategy of Cyprus,[35] in the horizontal actions implemented, the needs of vulnerable

[34] Department of Information Technology Services – Ministry of Finance- http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/dits/dits.nsf/page08_gr/page08_gr?OpenDocument.

[35] Department of Electronic Communication – Ministry of Communication and Works- http://www.mcw.gov.cy/MCW/DEC/Digital_Cyprus/ict.nsf/3700071379D1C658C2257A6F00376A80/$file/Main%20document%20digital%20strategy.pdf.

population groups are also integrated, such as accessibility of websites and online services that help serve the vulnerable groups. The Department has jurisdiction to appoint by a Decree the radio features used, for convenience purposes of individuals with disabilities under the Radiocommunications Law 2002, N.146 (I) / 2002.[36]

91. The **Office of the Commissioner for Electronic Communications and Postal Services,** an independent authority, is responsible for the *Regulation of Electronic Communications and Postal Services Law of 2004 (Law 112 (I) / 2004)*.[37] The Telecommunications Universal Service Decision 2005[38] provides that the Catholic Telecommunications Service includes the provision of services or facilities for persons with disabilities, of low-income and / or with special social needs, in accordance with what is specified in Annex IV of the Decision.

92. **The Digital Champion** designated by a Council of Ministers Decision in October 2012 has undertaken the action of "e-Inclusion of persons with disability" in order to provide assistance to persons with disabilities so they can take advantage of the Technologies of Information and Communication, both in everyday life and at work.

93. The EU initiative for defining Digital Champions, was designed to promote information technologies and communications, so that citizens of the European Union become users of digital technology and knowledgeable about the positive effects of its use. The Digital Champion of each country is the ambassador of the Information Society in his country. Its mission is to promote digital strategy with an emphasis on labour, development, digital inclusion and digital skills, and enable new operators and industries to implement the digital strategy.

94. The **Press and Information Office** of the Ministry of Interior is the government publishing organization of information leaflets dealing with disability issues. The responsibilities of the service are to promote the work of Cyprus in matters concerning disability by issuing announcements. The Office does not publish printed Braille format for persons with visual disabilities.

95. **The Ministry of Education and Culture** ensures access of children with disabilities to information of print and electronic media. The information and content of all subjects taught in public schools (in Primary and Secondary Education) are accessed through special technological equipment provided to children with special needs after they have undergone an evaluation by the District Committees of Special Education and Training. Children are provided communication devices, closed-circuit TVs and other equipment to enlarge letters, special keyboards, special software and other technological aids.

96. Furthermore, sign language is implemented and used for children with hearing loss and writing in Braille is also taught to children with vision problems. Also, translation of school textbooks in Braille is undertaken by the School for the Blind in order to be used by children with visual disabilities.

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[36] Department of Electronic Communication – Ministry of Communication and Works- http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dec/dec.nsf/DMLlaws_gr/DMLlaws_gr.

[37] Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications and Postal Services http://www.ocecpr.org.cy/media/documents/Legislation/EC_FinalDecision_Market18_GR_27-03-2013_PH.pdf.

[38] Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications and Postal Services- http://www.ocecpr.org.cy/ngcontent.cfm?a_id=437&tt=ocecpr&lang=gr.

97. The Ministry of Education and Culture accepts and recognizes sign language following the Recognition of Cyprus Sign Language Law (L.66 (I) 2006).[39] In training seminars organized by the Department of Primary Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture generally, an interpreter of sign language is provided, wherever necessary. Simultaneously at the School for the Deaf sign language interpreters are employed to serve the needs of children who attend there.

98. The Ministry of Education and Culture accepts and provides the ease of use of writing Braille to children with visual disabilities. The School for the Blind prepares texts in this script and provides them to all children with visual disabilities who attend public schools. The School for the Blind also offers courses for learning the Braille writing system in children and adults with visual disabilities. Furthermore, at the School for the Blind, persons from the Public Service are employed for the transcription of printed texts in this format. For the same purpose cooperation is also held with persons from the private sector. These people are occupied, in particular, with the transcription into Braille of textbooks, texts and activities for children with visual disabilities who are integrated into mainstream schools and schools of all grades. The School for the Blind also houses a small "library" of books in oral form. Additionally, the School for the Blind educates children and persons with visual disabilities to any specific device or electronic mean that can provide access to information. For example it provides closed-circuit TVs, makes use of the Online Service "Robobraille" or equipment called "Sara" or "Pearl". The specific devices or electronic media enable the direct conversion of printed text into spoken text giving access to a wide range of books, magazines and newspapers.

99. The **Cyprus RadioTelevision Authority** is an independent authority and has the basic responsibility of the regulation and supervision of the broadcasting field, based on *the Radio and Television Law 1998-2011*:[40]

(1) The media service providers under the jurisdiction of Cyprus shall ensure that their services are gradually made accessible to persons with a visual or hearing disability;

(2) Every broadcaster is obliged to broadcast between the hours of 18.00 and 22.00 special newscast understood by persons with hearing disabilities, at least five minutes of the hour. It is provided that the view of the above mentioned special news bulletin is at least half of the television screen;

(3) The media service, after consultation with the Authority, submits to the Authority a schedule, within one year of the entry into force of this article, specifying particular ways to gradually increase the rates of their programmes, at least 5 per cent in addition to newscasts, which will become accessible to persons with visual or hearing disability.

100. Furthermore, this legislation prohibits commercial communications to include or promote any discrimination including discrimination on the basis of disability.

101. **The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** implements the Scheme for the provision of Financial Assistance to Persons with Disabilities for the Supply of Technical Means, Instruments and other Aids, under which they have the opportunity to buy equipment which will facilitate their lives, such as computers, computer

[39] Ministry of Education and Culture-http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/kypriaki_noimatiki_glossa/documents/nomos_anagnorisi_noimatikis.pdf.

[40] Cyprus RadioTelevision Authority-http://www.crta.org.cy/images/users/1/CRTA-LAW7(1)98%20FINAL%202011.pdf.

software, cell phones, communication devices and closed-circuit television. Additional information about the Scheme are mentioned under article 19.

102. **The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** through the Scheme for the provision of grants to organizations of persons with disability provides an annual subsidy of €9,000 to the Cyprus Federation of the Deaf to provide sign language interpreting services to deaf people.

Article 10 – Right to life

103. The right to life of every human being, with and without disabilities, is protected by article 7 of the Constitution,[41] according to which each has the right to life and physical integrity. The death penalty has been abolished in Cyprus with a Law passed in 1983. Euthanasia is forbidden for all persons including persons with disabilities.

Article 11 – Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

104. Addressing risk situations, situations of armed conflict, natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies is the responsibility of various services in Cyprus being **the Civil Defence of the Ministry of Interior, the Police and the Fire Department of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and the Cyprus Army of the Ministry of Defence**, depending on the nature and severity of the situation.

Article 12 – Equal recognition before the law

105. According to the Constitution of Cyprus and article 28, all citizens are equal before the law regardless of race, colour, religion, language, gender, beliefs, origin, birth, wealth, social class or any other discrimination.

106. The Administration of the Property of Incompetent Persons Law[42] of 1996, concerns all persons who either due to disability or due to other factors, after a medical evaluation are considered to be unable to exercise judgment and free will and cannot manage financial and other affairs. The competent court, which is the district court within the jurisdiction of which the individual resides has the power according to a decree to appoint an administrator of the legal and financial affairs of the individual. The administrator is responsible within 30 days of his appointment to present in writing to the court all of the assets of the person with disability. Within 12 months from the appointment and every 12 months the administrator is responsible to present details of his actions concerning the individual with disabilities in economic and other legal issues. The actions taken by the administrator must be in the best interest of the person with disabilities. If the court finds that the administrator has violated the law, it has the power to terminate the duties of the administrator and appoint another person.

107. Recognizing the weaknesses of this law in terms of the ability to exercise legal capacity of persons with intellectual disabilities and in the context of modernization of the

[41] Constitution of the Cyprus Republic – Ministry of Foreign Affairs http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/constitution_gr/constitution_gr#2.

[42] List of Laws from the Pancyprian Attorney Association http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/1996_1_23.html.

Persons with Intellectual Disability Law, (L.117/89)[43] amendments have been included regulating the institution of advocacy, empowerment and support of persons with intellectual disabilities concerning preferences, decision-making, assertion of their rights and the exercise of legal capacity to the maximum extent possible.

Article 13 – Access to justice

108. According to article 30 of the Constitution, all persons have the right to appeal in court. The court procedures must be followed for all persons who appeal, equally and without any discrimination.

109. The Law on the Rights of Persons Arrested and Detained of 2005,[44] has special provisions (article 3 (4), article 4, article 5 (2), article 7 (4), article 12 (4) and article 23) about persons with disabilities that state that any person arrested and is unable to perform and understand basic rights due to any intellectual deficiency or physical incapacity, then officers of the Medical and / or Social Services of the State must become available to him / her for support. Also, the person must be informed of their rights and if this is not possible due to the limitations of his / her disability, then the family and relatives must be called. According to article 5 (2), foreigners with disabilities who have limitations in communication have the right to ask the police to invite people from the Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights to attend. Article 12 (4) includes the provision of an interpreter for persons with disabilities who cannot communicate well with their lawyer.

Article 14 – Liberty and security of the person

110. Article 11 of the Constitution states that all persons have the right to liberty and personal security. The only reasons concerning the deprivation of freedom are related to criminal offenses after the court finds the person guilty and defines imprisonment. Any person who has been deprived of his liberty by arbitrary discrimination has the right to appeal to the court.

Article 15 – Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

111. The Constitution of Cyprus, through article 8, establishes that no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment. Article 10 adds that no person should be subjected to slavery or forced into mandatory detention or work.

112. Cyprus has ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment[45] together with various laws and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Optional Protocol to which Cyprus is a party, provides that:

(a) The establishment of a 10-member Subcommittee on Prevention, as an international body, in which the States Parties should be ensured access to places of

[43] Committee for the Protection of Persons with Mental Handikap- http://www.cpmental.com.cy/cpnka/page.php?pageID=16.

[44] List of Laws from the Pancyprian Attorney Association http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/2005_1_163.html.

[45] Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights- http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/ombudsman.nsf/cases_gr/cases_gr?OpenDocument.

detention to perform visits and provide any necessary information. The Subcommittee has the duty to advise and support in any way requested or judges appropriate, the national preventive mechanisms, established under the Optional Protocol;

(b) The establishment of a national mechanism to prevent torture. The Ombudsman was designated as a prevention mechanism by the ratification of the above law.

113. According to the Rights of Persons Arrested and Detained Law,[46] article 19 makes it clear that each prisoner, including persons with disabilities, is entitled:

(a) To respect for the right of not being subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment or any physical, psychological or mental violence;

(b) Dignified treatment, behaviour, and living;

(c) Living in a reasonably sized cell, which provides the basic amenities and sanitation, adequate lighting and ventilation equipment and suitable rest.

Article 16 – Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

114. The Family Violence Law passed in 1994[47] states that "violence" is defined as any unlawful act or behaviour by which direct actual physical, sexual or mental harm is presented to any member of the family and also includes the violence which is exercised with a view to reaching sexual contact without the consent of the victim, as well as the restriction of the freedom of the person. Any person exercising violence, under this Law, commits an offense, which is punishable, unless another law specifies stricter penalty, with five years of imprisonment or with a financial penalty, or with both penalties, without this affecting the power of the Court to impose in virtue with this law or any other law any other penalty which can be in addition or replacing the penalties mentioned above.

115. According to this Law, the person who has experienced violence may be removed from his home and brought to a safe environment where they will not be in any risk. Also a family counsellor can be provided who will be responsible amongst other things to support and guide the family in order to minimize the problems of the family that lead or can lead to violence and to provide arrangements for the immediate medical examination of the victim.

116. This law provides for the establishment of an Advisory Committee which aims to research and deal with the phenomenon of family violence in Cyprus.

Article 17 – Protecting the integrity of the person

117. Articles 7 and 11 of the Cyprus Constitution stipulate that every person has the right of respect for physical and mental integrity on an equal basis with others.

[46] List of Laws from the Pancyprian Attorney Association http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/2005_1_163.html.

[47] Advisory Committee for Family Violence-http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/cgibin/hweb?-V=legislationgr&_FSECTION=10040&-dlegislationgr.html&-Sr&_

Article 18 – Liberty of movement and nationality

118. According to article 13 of the Cyprus Constitution, all persons, including persons with disabilities have the right to free movement within the territory of Cyprus and the right to reside in any part of the island. Each person also has the right, under the same article to withdraw from the territory of Cyprus and move to any other country of his desire. Article 14 of the Constitution adds that all citizens are allowed entrance in Cyprus and are not discriminated in any way.

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community

119. The Constitution in article 9 specifies that each person has the right to independent living and social security.

120. Cyprus takes various measures to facilitate the right of persons with disabilities for independent living and inclusion and participation in the community.

121. The three main government agencies that take such measures through social benefits and / or services is the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Social Welfare and the Mental Health Services.

122. **The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** operates a number of social benefits schemes and services regardless of income criteria, which aim to offset the cost of disability experienced by persons with disabilities and especially those with severe disabilities.

123. For those individuals whose disability satisfy the criteria and conditions of the relevant laws or schemes the Department provides the following five monthly allowances:

(a) Severe Motor Disability Allowance[48] of €337.66;

(b) Care Allowance for Paraplegic Persons[49] €350;

(c) Care Allowance for Quadriplegic Persons[50] €854.30;

(d) Special Allowance for Blind Persons[51] €316.37;

(e) Mobility Allowance[52] €51 or €102 depending on the disability.

[48] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd10_gr/dsipd10_gr?OpenDocument.

[49] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd12_gr/dsipd12_gr?OpenDocument.

[50] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd11_gr/dsipd11_gr?OpenDocument.

[51] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance-
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/06F37D2067C298D4C2257A7C002CFE84/$file/N.11(1)2011_pdf.pdf.

[52] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance-
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/All/57271588CBA96B6CC2257AA10047BBAA?OpenDocument.

124. Additionally, the Department provides financial assistance to people who meet the criteria and conditions of the following schemes:

(a) Scheme for the Provision of Financial Assistance for the Purchase of a Wheelchair;[53]

(b) Financial assistance scheme for the provision of technical means, instruments and other aids;[54]

(c) Allowance Scheme for the Provision of a Disability Car;[55]

(d) Assistance through the Welfare Lottery Fund.[56]

125. Additionally the Department provides:

(a) Disability Parking Card Scheme (Blue Badge);

(b) Lending Scheme of Wheelchair and Technical Aids;

(c) Financial Assistance for Organizations of Persons with Disabilities.[57]

126. During the operation of various schemes provided by the Department for Social Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities some delays are presented due to the need of medical examination by different medical boards in order to evaluate the applicants or due to lengthy procedures for the examination of evidence provided by the applicants.

127. By purchasing services from private practitioners and other health and rehabilitation professionals great improvement has been seen in last years in the processes of medical board evaluations which has partly speeded up the examination of the applications. But further modernization and acceleration of the time considering an application is expected with the completion of the project in progress for the establishment of a new System for the Assessment of Disability and Functioning.

128. Additional delay occurs in cases where applications have to be examined by various advisory committees, or require a number of documents and evidences presented by the applicant, such as quotations of the required technical aids and declaration of receipt. A number of Schemes are in the procedure of modernization.

129. The data of the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in 2011 in relation to the Social Provision Schemes are presented below:

1. **Scheme:** Care Allowance for Quadriplegic Persons

   Actual Expenditure (2011): €6,102,398

   Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 557

2. **Scheme:** Care Allowance for Quadriplegic persons

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[53] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd16_gr/dsipd16_gr?OpenDocument.

[54] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd19_gr/dsipd19_gr?OpenDocument.

[55] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd15_gr/dsipd15_gr?OpenDocument.

[56] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance-
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/All/6A88404BEC1C790DC2257B44003249FC/$file/N%2079%28I%29%201992_pdf.pdf.

[57] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social insurance- http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd23_gr/dsipd23_gr?OpenDocument.

Actual Expenditure (2011): €2,432,651

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 475

3. **Scheme:** Special Allowance for the Blind

Actual Expenditure (2011): €11,341,813

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 2,804

4. **Scheme:** Severe Motor Disability Allowance

Actual Expenditure (2011): 6,483,125

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 1,602

5. **Scheme:** Mobility Allowance

Actual Expenditure (2011): 301,506

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 454

6. **Scheme:** Financial assistance scheme for the provision of technical means, instruments and other aids

Actual Expenditure (2011): €743,572

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 449

7. **Scheme:** Scheme for the Provision of Financial Assistance for the Purchase of a Wheelchair

Actual Expenditure (2011): €522,156

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 205

8. **Scheme:** Allowance for the Provision of a Disability Car

Actual Expenditure (2011): €1,585,800

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 183

9. **Scheme:** Scheme for the subsidization of vacation for persons with disabilities

Actual Expenditure (2011): €269,162

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 1,404

10. **Scheme:** Assistance through the Welfare Lottery Fund

Actual Expenditure (2011): €106,955

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 31

11. **Scheme:** Financial Assistance for Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

Actual Expenditure (2011): €149,000

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 19

12. **Scheme:** Financial Assistance to the Organizations of Persons with Disabilities for hiring Social Assistants for their members

Actual Expenditure (2011): €34,701

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 6

13. **Scheme:** Disability Parking Card Scheme (Blue Badge)

Actual Expenditure (2011): ------

Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 716

Total: €30,072,839

130. For every person lawfully residing in Cyprus who does not have the necessary resources to meet his / her basic and specific needs as defined by the Public Assistance and Services Laws 2006–2012,[58] the Social Welfare Services provide public allowance and care services. In children with disabilities public allowance is provided without means testing criteria while in adults the public allowance is given according to income criteria. The monthly public allowance covers basic needs up to the amount of €452, disability allowance up to €226 (i.e. ½ of basic needs) and measures of social cohesion up to the amount of €142.38. Additional aid for the employment of a domestic worker-carer is provided to persons in need of home care (unless is a care allowance beneficiary from DSID).

131. Apart from the financial assistance, the Social Welfare Services provide support services and facilities to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities in their own social environment. Such services are:

(a) Home care (personal care, house cleaning, laundry, escort to the hospital, outside work, for example, bill payments and shopping, and enhancement and education of family members in key domestic and family work);

(b) Day care (gives the opportunity to persons with disabilities to be served by the Senior[59] or Adults Centres[60] during the day, for example, food, laundry, employment and entertainment);

(c) Residential care (provided for persons who need constant care and whose needs cannot be met by their families, and neither from the support services offered in the environment in which they live in).

132. Furthermore, provide consulting support to a) strengthen and support the family in order to keep close to their members with the disability and b) strengthen and support individuals with disabilities for the better functioning of the family.

133. Additionally, the Social Welfare Services operate the Grants in Aid Scheme and the Scheme for Local Authorities and Partnerships with Voluntary Organizations.[61] The grant for social care programmes and some psychosocial support programmes target specific groups such as persons with visual disability and paraplegic persons, and within these programmes opportunities are offered for recreation and employment.

134. According to SWS opinion, under the existing allowance policy in Cyprus for persons with disabilities a united single model does not exist, instead the benefits cover specific categories of diseases and disabilities. This results in some categories to receive fewer or no benefits in comparison to other categories, despite the fact that they may have the same needs. Also, there is no uniform system of scientific evaluation and documentation of disability and functioning of persons with disabilities.

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[58] Social Welfare Services – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance- http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/dmllegislation_gr/dmllegislation_gr?OpenDocument&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=1.

[59] Social Welfare Services – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/dmllegislation_gr/dmllegislation_gr?OpenDocument&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=1.

[60] Social Welfare Services – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/dmllegislation_gr/dmllegislation_gr?OpenDocument&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=1.

[61] Social Welfare Services – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/dmlcommunity_gr/dmlcommunity_gr?OpenDocument.

135. Social Welfare Services have prepared an amendment concerning the Public Assistance Law and also a Scheme for Financial Assistance for Persons with Disabilities, in order for persons with disabilities to be benefited through a specific scheme that will aim towards the social protection of disability, the benefits policy and the coverage of their care needs.

136. The data of the Social Welfare Services for 2011 are presented below:

1. **Scheme:** Public Allowance

   Actual Expenditure (2011): €94,585,934

   Number of beneficiaries 2011: 8714 households

2. **Service:** Nea Eleousa Home

   Actual Expenditure (2011): €574,529

3. **Programme:** State homes in the Community

   Actual Expenditure (2011): €3,129,253

4. **Scheme:** Scheme for the provision of grants to NGO

   Actual Expenditure (2011): €2,851,500

   Number of beneficiaries 2011: 43 programmes

5. **Scheme:** Scheme for the provision of grant to Local Authorities or cooperatives with NGO

   Actual Expenditure (2011): €61,000

   Number of beneficiaries 2011: 2 programmes

   Total: €101,202,216

137. Day Centres of the **Mental Health Services** operate programmes on a daily basis with the primary objective of promoting psychosocial rehabilitation of persons with chronic mental health problems. The Centres greatly assist in developing and improving social skills, self-care skills and independent living.

138. All the above mentioned social benefits are quite significant and contribute greatly to addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. As seen through the European Health Survey 2008 of the Statistical Service, regarding the care needs of persons over 15 years, data showed that 0.3 per cent fail or with great difficulty are able to feed themselves, 1.3 per cent fail or with great difficulty are able to sit and get up from bed, 1.4 per cent are unable or experience great difficulty in getting dressed and undressed, 0.9 per cent are unable or experience great difficulty in using the toilet, 1.6 per cent fail with great difficulty are able to use the bathroom. 2.8 per cent of people who face difficulties in their activities receive assistance from another person, 0.5 per cent are supported by technical means, device or component and 0.1 per cent have altered their residence into being accessible. More information on the field of independent living is presented in statistical tables in Annex 3.

Article 20 – Personal mobility

139. To enhance the mobility of persons with disabilities, as mentioned in article 19 above, the **Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** provides mobility allowance, financial assistance for the purchase of wheelchairs, technical equipment, instruments, devices and a disability car, lends wheelchairs and technical

means, issues a parking card and subsidizes organizations for the employment of social attendants.

140. The **Ministry of Education and Culture** takes measures to ensure mobility with the greatest possible independence for children with disabilities, as is described in the Report under article 24.

Article 21 – Freedom of expression and opinion and access to information

141. Articles 18 and 19 of the Constitution provide that all persons have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Each person can freely express its views in any way he / she wishes. This right includes receiving and transmitting information to and from all individuals and departments. Accessibility to information is described in the Report under article 9.

Article 22 – Respect for privacy

142. Articles 15 and 17 of the Constitution provide that every person has the right to a private personal and family life. Each person has the right to privacy of correspondence and any other form of communication, except for persons serving a prison sentence.

143. The Law on Processing of Personal Data signed in 2001,[62] ensures who will have authorization to the processing of personal information and under what conditions, for all people, including persons with disabilities. Also in accordance with this law persons with disabilities can be informed about the nature and relevance of data that exists on their behalf as well as to have access to it and prevent any publication of it. This law is supervised by the **Commissioner for the Protection of Personal Data.**

Article 23 – Respect for home and the family

144. Article 16 of the Constitution states that the residence of every person is inviolable and no one can enter unless there are under court orders. In accordance with article 23 everyone has the right to hold a personal residence.

145. According to article 22 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to marry when he / she has attained the age of 18 and meets the requirement of distant relativity and non-polygamy. Concerning civil marriage in Cyprus, the Civil Marriage Law[63] states that people who have no legal capacity cannot perform a civil marriage.

146. The Law on Parental Leave and Leave on Grounds of Force Majeure[64] states that all persons already employed, men and women who work in continuous employment for six months with the same employer are entitled to receive unpaid parental leave, the duration of which may last up to 18 weeks, because of the birth or adoption of a child with the purpose

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[62] Commissioner for the Protection of Personal Data http://www.dataprotection.gov.cy/dataprotection/dataprotection.nsf/legislation_gr/legislation_gr?OpenDocument

[63] Κατάλογος των νομοθεσιών από τον Παγκύπριο Δικηγορικό Σύλλογο- http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/1990_21.html.

[64] Κατάλογος νομοθεσιών από το Παγκύπριο Δικηγορικό Σύλλογο- http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/2012_1_47.html.

of the care and upbringing of the child. The Maternity Protection Law[65] signed in 1997 states that no woman, including women with disabilities can be fired from her job because of her pregnancy. The Law applies throughout pregnancy and three months after the end of the maternity leave.

147. The Law concerning Adoption of 1995[66] states that all persons have the right to adopt and be adopted when the required procedures are carried out by the State and when the Court concludes that the act of adoption is in the best interest of the adoptee. It is not mentioned in the Law any discrimination regarding persons with disabilities in the role of the person who wishes to adopt, except for persons with intellectual and mental disabilities. All children, including children with disabilities have the right to be adopted.

Article 24 – Education

148. The equal participation of all children to education is a basic principle of the **Ministry of Education and Culture**. Every child has the right to acquire all those goods that characterize the "educated" person of the 21st century. The constitutional "obligation in education" denotes the decision of society not to allow the exclusion of any child from the successful exercise of the right to education.

149. The Ministry of Education and Culture serves the needs of children with disabilities as provided in The Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Laws of 1999–2001[67] and in The Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Regulations of 2001.[68] This legislation provides children with disabilities with all the opportunities for equal education in order to develop their skills to the highest level. Meanwhile, the education of children is ensured and enhanced through the New Analytical Programmes, which apply to public schools from the school year 2010-2011.

150. According to the law "Child with Special Needs", is a broader concept than the "child with disabilities" and it means a child who has severe learning or specific learning, functional or adaptive difficulty, due to physical (including sensory), intellectual or other cognitive or mental deficiencies and it is necessary to provide special education and training. A child experiences learning, specific learning, functional or adaptive difficulty if it:

(i) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning or adapting compared to the majority of children of his age; or

(ii) Has a disability that precludes or inhibits the use of educational facilities that are generally presented in schools for children of his age.

151. "Special Education" means providing the necessary assistance to the child with special needs for its overall development in all sectors, especially in the psychological, social, and educational sector, including all levels of education (pre-primary, secondary and higher) and pre-vocational and vocational training in schools, where possible, and includes

[65] Τμήμα Εργασίας – Υπουργείο Εργασίας και Κοινωνικών Ασφαλίσεων- http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/dl.nsf/dmllegislation_gr/dmllegislation_gr?OpenDocument.

[66] Υπηρεσίες Κοινωνικής Ευημερίας – Υπουργείο Εργασίας και Κοινωνικών Ασφαλίσεων http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/dmllegislation_gr/dmllegislation_gr?OpenDocument&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=1.

[67] Ministry of Education and Culture- http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/nomothesia/Nomothesia_N%20_13(I)_99.pdf.

[68] Ministry of Education and Culture- http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/nomothesia/Kanonismoi_KDP_186_%202001.pdf.

teaching everyday skills of self-care, personal hygiene, mobility, language development and communication, emotional culture and generally ensures that all instruments, supplies and human resources aim in school and social integration and independent life.

152. According to the basic provisions of the above law, the State completes an evaluation of the needs of children by a multidisciplinary evaluation team and provides special education and training from the age of three until the completion of their studies. The evaluation of the needs of each child that is deemed likely to have special needs is done by **District Committees of Special Education and Training** of each province, with a multidisciplinary team.

153. The District Committees of Special Education and Training have a duty to adequately assess the needs of each child, which has either been identified by the school system and was referred to the Committee or it came to the attention of the Committee by a third party. The Committee decides, based on the assessment, the provision or not of special education and training and in the case that such education and training needs to be provided, the Committee is responsible to define the details of special education, facilities or exemptions, technological means, special equipment, special seating / wheelchairs and the auxiliary personnel needed to be provided. Simultaneously, the Committee understands the needs of the school system and recommends the operation of units of special education and training, and the establishment of special education schools where necessary.

154. The parents of the child have the right to submit written representations in relation to the decisions of the Committee of Special Education and Training if they disagree with the Committee and to present proposals of alternative arrangements or even to interrupt the education of the child. The parents can also inform the Committee that they intend, at their own expense, to follow alternatives arrangements for giving the child the designated special education in private schools or elsewhere, as appropriate. They can also suggest interrupting the further education of the child, giving the reasons for the decision, if the child attends a mainstream school and has completed the compulsory educational levels.

155. A child with special needs which was evaluated by the Committee for Special Education and Training can study:

(1) In a mainstream class of a mainstream school;

(2) In a special unit of a mainstream school;

(3) In a special school equipped with the appropriate infrastructure.

156. If, for reasons specified, a child cannot attend a school in the district in which the child lives, the Committee provides free transportation to and from the school which the child attends.

Mainstream classroom in a mainstream school

157. Children with special needs who were identified as needing special education and training are entitled to free attendance at a public school for the provision of special education and training in a mainstream classroom equipped with the necessary infrastructure, in accordance with the education and training programme of the Ministry, tailored to the specific needs of the education of the children.

158. In the occasion that special education and training is provided, in whole or in part, in a mainstream classroom, the Committee chooses the public school and the class, or the exemptions, modifications or adjustments to the curriculum, the type of support that will be provided to the child, the necessary building and environmental changes at the school and the Special Education Coordinators that will assume direct responsibility for the child.

Special Unit

159. Attendance of a child with special needs can be arranged in a specialized unit that operates in mainstream schools. The special units are incorporated and integrated into mainstream schools and operated in places convenient and accessible to children with disabilities. The director of the ordinary school that houses the special unit is responsible for its operation.

160. Children of the special unit are enrolled normally in the school and in the list of students that attend the class according their age.

161. The total number of children in each special unit is determined on the basis of age, disability and the characteristics and functioning of the special unit. Competent to decide the total number of pupils in the special unit is the Committee, having heard the views of the Director of the school, the Special Education Coordinator, the relevant Inspector of Special Education and the teacher of the unit.

Public Special Education and Training School

162. A Public Special Education School is established and operated in accordance with the provisions of the Law to provide special education to children with special needs. These schools are staffed with the necessary academic and other professional staff (psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and others) as well as auxiliary staff and is equipped with modern equipment necessary for the fulfilment of their mission.

163. Children who attend Special Education schools are grouped taking into account the age and characteristics of each child. The number of students in a group is defined, based on the assessed needs of each child, by a multidisciplinary team conducted by an Inspector of Special Education, an educational psychologist, a teacher of Special Education, all from the public sector, and the school director.

164. The educational policy of special education schools involves a continuous system of contact between the schools of special education and training and the mainstream schools in their area and the organization of joint activities.

165. Persons with disabilities who attend special schools are entitled to extend schooling to 21 years of age, if considered necessary.

Provision of special education and training in other places

166. Children with special needs of Primary and Secondary Education who cannot, due to long term health reasons, follow the regular curriculum in school education can be educated otherwise (at home or in hospitals). The coursework outside the school is part of the regular curriculum in mainstream classes in which the children are enrolled.

Individual education programme

167. The Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law of 1999 (113 (I) / 1999) provides in addition to identifying and assessing children with special needs, developing individualized education programmes for each child with special needs. Based on the individual educational programme the necessary support for the overall development of the child in all fields is provided, particularly in the psychological, social, educational and emotional field, aimed at school and social integration and independent life.

Special Education Coordinators

168. The Minister of Education and Culture according to the needs presented in each District, provides officers who carry out the duties of a Special Education Coordinator. The

tasks of Special Education Coordinators as determined by The Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law include: the preparation in collaboration with teachers and parents of an individualized education programme for the child, monitoring the development of the child based on the assessed needs, providing support and guidance to parents, collaboration with the school administration, teachers and any other person involved for the effective provision of the designated special education, solving problems that arise and provide any assistance under the concept of special education.

169. The information and content of all subjects taught in public schools (in Primary and Secondary Education) are accessed through special technological equipment provided to children with special needs after an evaluation by the District Committee of Special Education and Training. The children are provided with communication devices, closed-circuit TVs and other equipment to enlarge letters, special keyboards, especially software and other technological aids.

170. As mentioned under article 9 — Access to information, the Ministry of Education and Culture accepts and recognizes sign language and accepts and provides the ease of use of Braille writing in children with visual disabilities.

171. **The Educational Psychology Service** is interdisciplinary and the educational psychologists aim at all levels of education, i.e. pre-primary, Primary, Secondary and Technical.

172. The mission of the Educational Psychology Service is the protection and promotion of mental health and to facilitate learning and all-round development of each individual involved in the education system from pre-primary up to secondary education.

173. Educators, parents / guardians, and older children can refer to educational psychologists in order to gain the provision of specialized assistance so as to deal with a range of difficulties such as learning, emotional, behavioural difficulties and adjustment, physical and other disabilities. The District Committees of Special Education and Training refer to the Educational Psychology Service evaluation, children who attend public or private schools in order to submit proposals for the provision of necessary special education or services.

174. Educational psychologists make necessary interventions in the school system, especially in classes where children with special needs are studying in order to be accepted and to avoid long-term marginalization. These interventions can be aimed at teachers, other students (peers) and, if necessary, the parents of these children.

175. During the school year 2011-2012 the educational psychologists of the Educational Psychology Service handled in all schools (nursery, primary, secondary schools, high schools, technical and specialized schools) 4,996 children. Compared with the previous year the number has increased by 5 per cent. Most cases in which educational psychologists were asked to interfere are for children from primary education and kindergarten (58.4 per cent).

176. The **Pedagogical Institute** offers training seminars in practicing educators at all levels of public and private education on matters of general pedagogical training, general teaching and teaching on subjects of the new curriculum and on issues of psychology and special education.

177. Seminars, conferences and actions relating to persons with special needs-disabilities are provided in order to broaden the knowledge of teachers and to raise awareness and mobilize action on inclusion of students with special needs in the school and in general social environment. Specialized training on issues concerning special education is part of optional seminars.

178. Generally, through teacher training, seminars on a school basis, optional seminars, support on school basis and conferences, teachers and parents are informed and aware of special education, diversity, equality and non-discrimination.

179. The Directors of Special Education and the Special Education Coordinators visit schools, organize seminars, workshops and other educational programmes to inform and sensitize teachers on special education.

180. The Ministry of Education and Culture in cooperation with the University of Cyprus, the Pedagogical Institute the Fulbright Institution, the British Council, organize intra-service seminars and invite experts from Cyprus and abroad with the goal to inform and educate teachers on disability issues. Also through the cooperation of the Ministry with the School of Parents training and awareness raising programmes are promoted so at to inform parents on such topics.

181. Because of evaluations concerning the public education system in Cyprus (for example, UNESCO Report) which highlighted the need for modernization of the curricula but also the Report on Education Reform[69] where this need was recorded in 2008, by the decision of the Council of Ministers (Decision No. 67339, dated. 11/6/2008), a process of "revising the curricula of pre-primary, gymnasium and upper secondary education" started. This process was completed and the new curricula are implemented in schools from the school year of 2010-2011.

182. The new curriculum is organized and implemented with a focus on the provision of effective prevention and elimination of negative consequences that often accompany children with disabilities, difficult family environment, economic hardship and different cultural backgrounds. The starting point of this approach is respect for every child and dedication to human rights. These goals are implemented by forming a democratic and humanitarian school in Cyprus.

183. Through statistical data of the Ministry of Education and Culture it is shown that in public primary schools and kindergartens children with special needs are at the rate of 5.96 per cent of the student population, in public junior schools 7.7 per cent, in public high schools 3.75 per cent and in technical schools 17.2 per cent. In special units of public kindergartens and primary schools 445 children are attending whereas in special schools 343 children are attending. At all levels of education it was indicated that children who have been assessed by the Committee of Special Education and Training and have been considered as children with disabilities, by province are 683 girls and 846 boys in Nicosia, 333 girls and 456 boys in Limassol, 267 girls and 494 boys in Larnaca and 93 girls and 193 boys in Paphos. More information on the data of the education sector can be found in Annex 4.

184. The State budgets of special education funds include:

- The employment of 533 special teachers / therapists to serve 3,184 children with disabilities enrolled in public elementary schools in September 2011;
- The provision of specialized personal equipment for children with disabilities (special seating / wheelchairs, special technological tools, computer and communication systems) and equipment of special schools, special units and reference rooms with computers and software programmes with a cost of €512,580 in Primary Education and €66,400 in Secondary Education in 2011;

[69] Ministry of Education and Culture-http://www.moec.gov.cy/ekpaideftiki_ekthesi/.

- The revaluations of school buildings with the construction of special bathrooms, ramps and special newsrooms with an estimated cost of €85,000 per school;
- The recruitment of school employees as assistants (School Assistants / Companions for children with special needs at the expense of €5,664,945 for Primary Education and €1,725,805 for Secondary Education in 2011;
- Free transportation of children with disabilities in special schools;
- The provision of a grant to the families of children with disabilities so that they can transfer their child, to a school not in his area, where necessary;
- The provision of a grant to the Parents Association of Special Schools for the implementation of employment programmes for children during non-working school time;
- The operation of nine special schools at the expense of €2.5 million in 2011.

185. The Ministry of Education and Culture is working with the Pancyprian Federation of Parents of Children with Special Needs. Representatives of the Federation participate in the Council of Special Education and Training. Responsibilities of the Council are to monitor the implementation of the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law as well as the formulation of proposals for development projects concerning special education and conducting research on special education. The Council may also appoint subcommittees or invite appropriate experts to study and discuss various issues.

186. The Departments of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education consider as one of the weaknesses of the system the large number of referrals made by schools to the Committees of Special Education and Training in order to assess the needs of children. This has resulted in a delay in the assessment of children and the delay of direct special assistance to children in need. It is observed that referrals include children who should have just been supported by the teaching staff of the school in order to overcome difficulties in the learning sector and do not need special evaluation.

187. In several cases, reduced involvement of the school unit (specialist teachers / professors / directors) in the process of integrating children with disabilities is observed. Integration coincides with the provision of special education, without the school system taking its own role and its own significant involvement in this process. The school integration in many cases may only be the responsibility of specific individuals (special education / teachers in the support programme / Special Education Coordinator).

188. With the implementation of the new curricula it is expected that the education system can meet the needs of all children including those with special needs. The new methodological approach of subjects, the changes of timetables, which provide an additional hour to refresh the daily knowledge acquired, aim to diversify teaching and overcome difficulties that may be experienced by children from their class teachers and to reduce unnecessary referrals for evaluation to the Committee.

189. Along with the intensive training of teachers in mainstream classrooms for the objectives of the New Analytic Programmes (for forming a humane and democratic school) it is expected that the involvement of the school unit in the education of children with disabilities and the educational system will be able to cope with the needs of all children including those with special needs.

Higher Education

190. According to the Pancyprian Examinations Amendment Law 51 (I) of 2007,[70] applicants who are persons with disabilities submit along with their application for participation in the national exams, a request to the "Special Committee for the provision of facilities" with the documents necessary for providing facilities during the Pancyprian Exam. The Special Committee examines the application submitted by the applicant and has the discretion power to accept, as appropriate, the following provisions:

- Extension of time limit for 30 minutes in each course;
- Simplify the language version of the examination essay;
- Discharge of spelling, punctuation, grammar;
- Provision of a person to transcript in all subjects;
- Magnifying of the examination essays.

191. Also, according to the Regulations of 2009 on Supernumerary positions in Specific Categories in the Public Universities of Cyprus[71] a specified number of supernumerary positions up to 14 per cent is allocated to applicants who fall into specific categories. Persons with disabilities are within the candidates belonging to "special categories" in the Pancyprian exams. In the Regulations (Reg. 266/2009) the subcategory of "special categories" typically refers to persons with disabilities as follows: "Cypriot candidates with serious health problems or other serious problems, 6 per cent."

192. The Public and Private Universities in Cyprus have mechanisms to support students with disabilities. Through the competent Office of Academic Affairs and Student Welfare operate Offices of Social Work and Support Counselling[72] for students with disabilities.

193. Academic facilities that may be granted to any student after evaluation are: the use of a tape recorder, oral exam, time extension, simplified examination essay, indulgence in syntactic and spelling errors, electronic texts and Braille form, magnification of the examination essay and notes, class notes in electronic format, tutorial support with the employment of graduate and / or undergraduate students, transcription of the exam, sign language interpreters, waive from the oral part of the examination.

194. In 2011 through a Ministry of Education and Culture grant, 269 students with disabilities were supported in the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology, at the expense of €341,600. The private higher education institutions, in some cases, are unable to cope financially in the concession of appropriate equipment for students with disabilities.

Lifelong Learning

195. At the **Adults Education Centres** persons with a disability of 75 per cent or more attend free classes in any subject they wish. Free groups also operate exclusively for persons with disabilities in special centres or institutions e.g. the State House for the Elderly and the Disabled in Latsia, the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities, the Cyprus Organization of Disabled Persons in Limassol, the Foundation of

[70] Ministry of Education and Culture http://www.moec.gov.cy/ypexams/pdf/nomothesia/nomos2006.pdf.

[71] Ministry of Education and Culture- http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/gpo/gpo.nsf/All/18FEAC3CF19B1617C22575E800352429/$file/4372%203.7.2009%20PARARTIMA%203o%20MEROS%20I.pdf.

[72] University of Cyprus http://www.ucy.ac.cy/goto/acafsw/el-GR/SocialSupportOffice.aspx.

Margaret Liasidis in Paphos. Twenty teams with an average of 12 people (total of about 240 people) benefit by taking courses that interest them at their own premises (Foundations, Associations, Organizations for people with disabilities) to the expense, during 2011, of approximately €35,000.

Article 25 – Health

196. The **Medical and Public Health Services** provide services to promote and safeguard the health of the population of Cyprus and for the treatment of diseases based on the principles set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and within the European perspective of health in Cyprus. These services are provided equally to all citizens without discrimination of sex, age or disability in:

- The five (5) Public General Hospitals of Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, Paphos and Famagusta;
- The special hospital for the Mother and Child, Archbishop Makarios III;
- The two regional hospitals of Kyperounda and Polis Chrysochous;
- The 35 Medical Centres of Primary Health Care (Nicosia 18, Limassol 7, Larnaca 4, Paphos 4, Famagusta 2).

197. The Medical Institutions and Services General Regulations 2000–2007[73] regulate the general provision of health care by the Public Health Services and the beneficiaries of free medical care. Persons with disabilities are entitled to free medical care. The provided medical care includes medical rehabilitation, including the procurement, maintenance and replacement of prosthetic and orthotic devices, home medical visits in exceptional cases for saving lives or to prevent serious disability.

198. The following Schemes are operated:

- Scheme for the provision of Financial Aid concerning Health Services[74] not offered in the public sector or not offered within the time limits required according to medical opinion in association to the state of health of the patient;
- Scheme for the purchase of hearing aids in congenitally deaf and elderly;
- Scheme for the provision of prosthetic and orthotic devices free to beneficiaries from the Centre of Orthotic and Prosthetics in Nicosia.

199. Recent developments promoted in relation to disability include: The National Strategy for Rheumatic Diseases,[75] the National Strategy for Rare Diseases,[76] the National Strategy for Alzheimer's, the National Action Plan for Health Care for the Elderly,[77] the setup of a Committee for the preparation / approval of tender specifications regarding the

[73] Medical services and Services of Public Health – Ministry of Health http://www.moh.gov.cy/moh/moh.nsf/legislation_gr/legislation_gr?OpenDocument.

[74] Ministry of Health-http://www.moh.gov.cy/MOH/MOH.nsf/0/0EBEB2C390440DD342257988003326 85?OpenDocument.

[75] Ministry of Health-http://www.moh.gov.cy/moh/moh.nsf/page75_gr/page75_gr?OpenDocument.

[76] Ministry of Health http://www.moh.gov.cy/moh/moh.nsf/page75_gr/page75_gr?OpenDocument.

[77] Ministry of Health-http://www.moh.gov.cy/moh/moh.nsf/All/80DAB27B1B417CDEC225786E004A3429?OpenDocument&highlight=%CE%B7%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B9%CF%89%CE%BC%CE%B5%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD.

purchase of rehabilitation services for patients with neurological diseases with fast track procedures, the decision to purchase services provided within the State hospitals by foreign medical specialists to ensure the possibility of specialization or training of Cypriot doctors and other professionals in rehabilitation, the monitoring programme of accessibility in hospitals and hospital equipment facilitating the transport of persons with mobility disabilities and actions for improvement in cooperation with the Cyprus Organization of Paraplegic.

200. **Mental Health Services** include the Athalassa Hospital, and the Psychiatric Clinic of Nicosia and Limassol which accept for treatment persons with mental disorders. Programmes offer assessment and treatment approaches with a focus on treatment and rehabilitation of mental patients. These hospitals are equipped to serve persons with physical disabilities where they coexist. The Psychiatric Care Law[78] provides for the establishment and operation of centres for psychiatric hospitalization for mentally ill persons, for the safeguarding of the rights of these persons and for the establishing of the duties and responsibilities of relatives.

201. The core policy of the Mental Health Services is the transfer of services from the mental health institution to the community. Decentralization and accessibility of services in the community is steadily promoted and implemented. A new legal instrument concerning the regulation of Community Mental Health Services is at a drafting stage.

202. The Community Services of Mental Health Services[79] aim at the direct response of requests and needs relating to mental health issues within the community. These Services are geared towards prevention and early identification of mental disorders in order to prevent chronicity of the disease with all its consequences.

203. Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents[80] are targeted to children and adolescents up to 17 years with a variety of psychosocial difficulties. They offer services in the field of prevention, diagnosis and treatment as well as education.

204. The Community Nursing Services of the **Nursing Services**,[81] are mainly covering the needs of persons who due to disability (physical or psychological) have difficulty in accessing health services.

I. Homecare: Covering the needs of persons who due to a physical disability do not have easy access to health services with the following actions:

- Interventions in areas of responsibility according to subject, for ensuring treatment continuity with home visits;
- Applying of nursing processes based on the Guidelines for more quality-related interventions in nursing diagnosis and practice;

[78] Mental Health Services – Ministry of Health
http://www.moh.gov.cy/moh/mhs/mhs.nsf/page37_gr/page37_gr?OpenDocument

[79] Mental Health Services – Ministry of Health-
http://www.moh.gov.cy/MOH/MHS/mhs.nsf/All/03AA0EC17284C095C2257AEE004722B7?OpenDocument.

[80] Mental Health Services – Ministry of Health-
http://www.moh.gov.cy/MOH/MHS/mhs.nsf/All/543CCA738E107FDDC2257AEE00471509?OpenDocument.

[81] Director of Nursing Services – Ministry of Health-
http://www.moh.gov.cy/MOH/MOH.nsf/All/F584360C65871FF2C2257A1E00273631/$file/%CE%9D%CE%BF%CF%83%CE%B7%CE%BB%CE%B5%CE%85%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%20%CE%A8%CF%85%CF%87%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82%20%CE%A5%CE%B3%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82%20090412.pdf?OpenElement.

- Counselling: Counselling of Health, Counselling of Diabetes, Health Education, Interventions in community homes for the Elderly, Day Centres, Liaison / Counselling Services;
- These actions are person — centred in order to mobilize individuals and communities with interventions not only for treatment but also for prevention of complications, with training, mentoring and empowering individuals in order to become able:
    - To treat and manage their problems;
    - To overcome obstacles to improve their living conditions;
    - To maximize their level of functional autonomy.

II. Liaison / Counselling Service of the General Hospitals of Nicosia and Limassol that serves as a vital bridge connecting the hospital to the community. The services offered to persons with disabilities are:

- Assessment of the needs of patients with disabilities based on criteria that focus on family and community context;
- Collaboration with hospital staff for Discharge Planning;
- Coordination of referral to Homecare Services;
- Counselling / guidance for patients on use of other services and facilities to ensure the provision of necessary resources (e.g. necessary equipment, supplies, connection to essential services such as Social Welfare, evaluation and organization);
- Counselling / guidance for families in regions not covered by the Homecare Services;
- Telephone counselling / guidance for individuals and families not covered by the Homecare Service.

III. Homecare for Persons with Mechanical Ventilation Support: It is offered in Nicosia and Limassol with the following interventions:

- To better serve patients, Community Nurses have continuous cooperation with the Therapeutic Group of Intensive Care Units (ICU) of the General Hospital of Nicosia and Limassol, but also with all the necessary hospital services (pharmacy, warehouse, accounting, administration);
- Holistic nursing care;
- Monitoring / evaluation of patients who are going to get discharged from the ICU;
- Assessment, education of caregivers for the daily care of patients and the use of technological equipment before getting the patient discharged;
- Continuous training of caregivers at homecare services;
- Therapeutic continuation with home visits, support in outpatient offices;
- Psychological support of patients, education and psychological support for families;
- Ensure the provision of necessary equipment and consumables for home needs;
- Organize and support the work of outpatient ICU.

205. The Community Mental Health Nurses[82] build networks of cooperation with all relevant community agencies to complete projects with health care interventions, from primary prevention to rehabilitation, for the continued support of persons with severe mental disabilities, for the implementation of independent living, where possible and the avoidance of social exclusion, with a large range of services and activities:

- Home visits;
- Management of Daily schemes of care and other specialized care programmes in the community;
- Participation in cooperative programmes;
- Crisis intervention;
- Specialized interventions in outpatient clinics, counselling centres, and other centres;
- Working with primary care teams;
- Collaboration with Government and non-government agencies;
- Working with groups of hospital structures;
- Liaison / Counselling;
- Treatment of mental health.

206. In **Pharmaceutical Services**,[83] in accordance with relevant regulations, disability groups are beneficiaries of free medication despite income criteria.

Article 26 – Habilitation and rehabilitation

207. Therapeutic rehabilitation services are provided by the **Medical Services and Public Health Services**:

(1) In the physiotherapy department of all public hospitals, for adults with musculoskeletal and neurological disorders, syndromes and other conditions causing disability;

(2) Archbishop Makarios III Hospital and in paediatric departments of all public hospitals for neonates and children with genetic or acquired musculoskeletal problems and other conditions causing disability.

The services in the above departments include:

- Physiotherapy to correct or minimize deformity, increase muscle strength, endurance and range of motion, alleviate pain, improve fitness and restore the functional capacity of the affected persons;
- Evaluation of persons requiring wheelchair or other aids according to the schemes of the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance;

[82] Mental Health Services — Ministry of Health- http://www.moh.gov.cy/MOH/MHS/mhs.nsf/All/03AA0EC17284C095C2257AEE004722B7?OpenDocument.

[83] Pharmaceutical Services – Ministry of Health http://www.moh.gov.cy/moh/phs/phs.nsf/dmlindex_gr/dmlindex_gr?OpenDocument.

- Home visits for ergonomic advice and suggestions on conversions aimed at facilitating access and service for persons with disabilities.

In Archbishop Makarios III Hospital and in general hospitals, speech therapy and social welfare are also offered but in limited number.

(1) At the rehabilitation centre of Spinal Cord Injuries in Nicosia's General Hospital the following are offered:

- Physical rehabilitation and to a lesser extent psychological and social support by a specialized physiotherapy and nursing team, and occupational therapist for people with spinal cord injury, of traumatic or pathological aetiology;
- Evaluation of persons requiring a wheelchair or other aids according to the schemes of the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance;
- Home visits to provide advice in relation to the space and the convenience of living;
- Operation of an outpatient service for paraplegic / quadriplegic patients from all over Cyprus with pathological, surgical, urological and other health problem;
- Operation of a window service for paraplegic / quadriplegic for the supply of consumables and specialized pillows;

(2) The House of "Nea Eleoussa" for persons with severe intellectual and physical disabilities employs one physical therapist to strengthen the physiotherapy services offered;

(3) In Day Care Centres for Persons with Alzheimer's in Kaimakli and Lythrodontas an occupational therapist is employed to enhance the services offered and advisory services from the physiotherapy department are also offered in accordance to the National Policy for Alzheimer's;

(4) The Veterans Rehabilitation Centre and also Centres abroad in cases that such services cannot be offered in Cyprus;

(5) Homecare Programme for persons with mechanical ventilation in collaboration with the Nursing Services.

208. For children with severe physical disabilities who attend special schools therapeutic interventions by physiotherapists, occupational therapists and special trainers are provided in order to enhance their motor skills.

209. Some of the weaknesses in the field of therapeutic rehabilitation are presented below:

- There is a lack of centres of comprehensive and integrated rehabilitation for genetic and acquired brain injuries (TBI, cerebral palsy) and musculoskeletal disorders (rheumatic disease, amputations) for adults and children with disabilities;
- Fragmentation of the rehabilitation services, lack of multidisciplinary treatment, limited social welfare services, lack of coordination and continuity of care for persons with disabilities;
- There is a need for skilled health professionals in the rehabilitation of different categories of disability;
- Specialized rehabilitation services for individuals with autism and other highly specialized disability status are not provided;

- Satisfactory services to persons with disabilities in the community and at home are not provided;
- There is no variety of special aids and appliances for persons with disabilities in Cyprus, and delays in the import process.

Article 27 – Work and employment

210. In the Equal Treatment of Work and Employment Law of 2004 and in the Persons with Disabilities Law 2000–2007 the European Directive 2000/78/EC, has been incorporated which defines the rights of persons with disabilities in employment. Every person who considers to be wronged by violation of this Law, in relation to discrimination in employment, is given the possibility to complain to the **Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights- Equality Authority,** which exercises the functions and powers of the Law against Racial and Other Discriminations of 2004 (L.142 (I)/2004) and the legislations mentioned above under article 5.

211. Also, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Convention, 1983 (No. 159), on vocational rehabilitation and employment for disabled persons, was ratified by the Ratifying Law 42/1987.[84] Articles 2-5 of the Convention impose special measures for vocational guidance and employment of persons with disabilities. In particular, article 4 specifies that special positive measures aimed at the effective equality of opportunity and treatment in employment between disabled workers and other workers shall not be deemed to discriminate against other workers.

212. **The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** provides the following vocational rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities:

(a) Operation of Schemes for Vocational Training Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities:[85]

- Providing financial assistance to person with disabilities for the purposes of creating small units / enterprises within the framework of the Special Fund of the Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Centre Law L.103 (I) / 2000.[86] The Scheme provides a grant up to €8,543 for persons with disabilities who do not have the financial means for self-employment. The amount of the grant approved mainly covers the purchase of machines and other equipment, raw materials and working capital. In 2011 three units were supported with a total grant of €20,536.
- Subsidizing organizations of persons with disabilities to operate supported employment programmes. Based on the Supported Employment Scheme[87]

[84] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/All/A47315E7980A3E4DC2257AA10048852B?OpenDocument.

[85] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd26_gr/dsipd26_gr?OpenDocument

[86] Department for social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/All/F36D497467D94AD6C2257B44003E8CEF?OpenDocument.

[87] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance-http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd26_gr/dsipd26_gr?OpenDocument

approved by the Council of Ministers in 1994, DSID subsidizes organizations for persons with disabilities with the amount of €13,500 per year, per programme of supported employment. The sponsorship is used to pay the salary of a job coach for each programme. During 2011, 22 projects operated with the employment of 246 people with disabilities and with a salary cost for job coaches up to the amount of €297,000.

(b) Application of The Recruitment of persons with Disabilities in the Wider Public Sector (Special Provisions) Law of 2009, L.146 (I) / 2009.[88] This law regulates the recruitment of persons with disabilities who meet specified objective criteria, in 10 per cent of current vacancies in the public sector. Its purpose is to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, offsetting the reduced opportunities available as a result of their disability. In 2011, 54 persons with disabilities were recruited under this law in the educational service, and 4 people in the public service. The implementation of the Recruitment of persons with Disabilities in the Wider Public Sector (Special Provisions) Law is indirectly affected by the economic crisis due to the freezing of recruitments in the public sector.

(c) Operation of sheltered workshops in the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities. During 2012 significant steps were taken to modernize the Centre with the integration of persons in the open labour market or with their transfer to other more modern workshops and with the deinstitutionalization of the boarders who are now living in their homes in the community with support. As a result only a sheltered employment workshop remains in the Centre, with a group of 5 people who cannot be integrated into other programmes and are occupied with support in gardening works at the Centre.

213. The Employment Services of the **Department of Labour**[89] offer free services for job seekers through the District and Local Employment Offices. The services offered concern the finding of a suitable work placement, the provision of advice and information on occupations, information on training opportunities and education and information on working conditions and labour legislation. The Advisors of the Employment Department are specially trained to serve vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities.

214. The Department of Labour also acts as an Intermediary Agency for projects co-funded by the European Social Fund. It is also responsible to implement Schemes of subsidizing the employment of persons with disabilities under the Axis "Enlargement of the Labour Market and Social Cohesion" that is included in the Organizational Programming Period of 2007–2013. During this period the Incentive Scheme for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Private Sector worked successfully, offering the opportunity for employment of 73 persons with disabilities in 2011 with the cost of €450,042.

215. **The Public Service Commission and the Education Service Commission** are responsible of recruiting persons with disabilities in the public service and educational service in accordance with Law 146 (I) / 2009.

216. According to the Law for Recruitment of Trained Blind Telephone Operators in the position of a Telephone operation in Public Service, Education Service and Public Legal

[88] Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance-
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/All/5E5F3AD92A3FA954C2257AA100466BA1?OpenDocument.

[89] Department of Labour – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/dl.nsf/dmlindex_gr/dmlindex_gr?OpenDocument#.

Entities (L.17/1998)[90] which is administered by the **Public Administration and Personnel Department**, ensures the right of vocational rehabilitation specifically for persons with visual disability as a priority, in positions in the wider public sector. The law provides exclusive priority to these individuals that acquire a diploma as telephone operators from the School for the Blind. If there are no visually impaired trained telephone operators, within the meaning of the law, the priority is given to other persons with disabilities.

217. The units of **Occupational Rehabilitation Services**[91] **by the Mental Health** Services — Ministry of Health have as their principal objective the multidisciplinary support of persons with psychosocial problems in order to achieve a satisfactory and effective reintegration into the labour market. They can help both job seekers through counselling in labour issues, and the people who are already in a professional environment and face difficulties. This objective is achieved through the evaluation and preparation of the person through individual and group training, ongoing support and guidance to employees in the workplace, raising awareness in public and community services and agencies in order to reduce stigma and prejudice in regards to Work Rehabilitation for Persons with mental health problems. 130 persons were served in 2011 through the Units.

218. **The Department of Social Welfare** when granting Public Assistance under the Public Assistance and Services Laws of 2006 and 2012, in the case of persons with disabilities, exempt from income criteria an amount up to €500 as a motive for persons with disabilities to remain in the active work force.

219. In **Special Schools of Special Education and Training**, prevocational education and training programmes are offered. These programmes are designed to develop skills so that children can meet the demands of the work environment and provide them with knowledge in order for the children to be able to exercise a profession.

220. Prevocational training programmes are also offered in **Special Units in high schools and technical schools**. The aim of these programmes is to enable individuals with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational abilities and inclusion and participation in all aspects of life. The aim of this educational and social policy is the smooth transition of these students from the school to the professional field.

221. To provide safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and investigation of any complaint, the Health and Safety in Employment Laws of 1996–2011[92] are into force under the responsibility of the **Department of Labour Inspection**, and require that each employer prepares a written risk assessment for the people employed, and any third parties at any workplace that is under its responsibility. According to the law the assessment can be made by the employer himself or his employees, or if they do not have the required qualifications and means, the assessment must be undertaken by the External Protection and Prevention of risks Services, which have received the approval of the Chief Inspector, i.e. the Director of the Department of Labour Inspection. Based on the findings of a written risk assessment, the employer shall take suitable and sufficient measures to eliminate or reduce the risks to the health and safety of

[90] List of Laws from the Pancyprian Attorney Association http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/1988_1_17/index.html.

[91] Mental Health Services – Ministry of Health- http://www.moh.gov.cy/MOH/MHS/mhs.nsf/All/F9B096B5D1C7B217C2257AFE0044B9D3?OpenDocument.

[92] Department of Labour Inspection – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance- http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dli/dli.nsf/All/292E937D17A4E043C22576F2002611E2/$file/Peri%20Asfaleias%20kai%20Ygeias%20Nomoi%201996-2011-ENOPOIHSI.pdf.

employees and third persons. The reported written assessment must take into account the already employed persons with disabilities and to guide the employer in measures such as setting the working environment, modification of work equipment, provision of appropriate training instructions.

222. According to the statistical data obtained from the Special Unit "Employment of persons with disabilities" in the Labour Force Survey 2011,[93] 20.6 per cent of employed persons aged 15-64 years reported that they face serious long-term health problem or chronic diseases (22 men, 4 per cent and women 18.6 per cent). The respective percentage among non-workers was 30.9 per cent (male 30.2 per cent female 31.3 per cent).

223. In the same survey it was shown that 6.4 per cent of employees and 16.2 per cent of non-employees reported that they have some considerable difficulty in basic activities. From the population that stated of having a chronic health problem or difficulty in basic activities it was reported that 14.5 per cent of the workforce and 52.9 per cent of non-workers would be restricted in the number of hours per week they could work, 28.4 per cent of employees and 60.2 per cent of non-workers stated that due to the abovementioned conditions they would also be restricted or limited to the type of their work, 2.9 per cent of employees and 21.9 per cent of non-workers would face difficulties in transportation to and from work, 3.9 per cent of employees and 25.7 per cent indicated the need or the possibility of needing personal assistance at work and 6.2 per cent of employees and 40.5 per cent of non-workers reported the need of special arrangements in the work environment.

224. In general, there is much room for activation and integration into the labour market of inactive persons with disabilities. As for the smooth transition from school to working life activity, weaknesses exist in relation to the acquisition of professional skills. The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities aims at a cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture for the coordination of services that provide guidance and the design of programmes for the acquisition of skills for a smooth and successful integration into employment. Also, systematic mechanisms for the assessment of disability and functioning have not yet been established in order to identify the training needs and employability of persons with disabilities and offer incentives to join the labour market, coupled with the professions with high market demand.

Article 28 – Adequate standard of living and social protection

225. In the field of social protection, in addition to public assistance provided by the Social Welfare Services to individuals who lack the financial resources to adequate standard of living as described under article 19, the **Department of Social Insurance**[94] provides to the Social Insurance beneficiaries the following benefits:

(a) Disability Pension according to the degree of incapacity in relation to work experience;

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[93] Labour Force Survey 2011 – Cyprus Statistic Services-
http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/All/50A7DDCE5922065AC2257B6A002F6D38/$file/LFS-2011-060912.pdf?OpenElement.

[94] Service of Social Insurance – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sid/sidv2.nsf/All/9CD6011AC9CD2687C2257A87002602C6/$file/%CE%9F%20%CF%80%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%AF%20%CE%9A%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8E%CE%BD%20%CE%91%CF%83%CF%86%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%AF%CF%83%CE%B5%CF%89%CE%BD%20%CE%9D%CF%8C%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%82%20%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%202010%20%28%CE%9D59%28%CE%99%29%202010%29.pdf.

(b) Invalidity Pensions for incapacity for work due to occupational accident or occupational disease.

226. The Invalidity pension is provided as compensation for the loss of employment and salary of persons, and therefore provides financial assistance in order for them to achieve an adequate standard of living. The Disability pension is a financial compensation for persons who have suffered permanent damage (but have not yet become unable to work) due to occupational disease or work accident. It is noted that disability pensioners are able to work.

227. According to the Social Insurance Laws:

Invalidity pension — paid to employees, self-employed and voluntary contributors under the employment of a Cypriot employer in third world countries, who have not completed 63 years of age and meet the following conditions:

(a) Inability to work for at least 156 days, and permanent incapacity for employment is foreseen;

(b) Oblige to the conditions of contributions to the Social Insurance;

(c) Loss in the ability of the applicant to win from employment an amount to 2/3, which is reasonably expected to perform when healthy, due to disease which emerged or worsened substantially after insurance.

Disability benefits — are at first provided as an allowance for injury until 12 months to employees, regardless of age, who due to accidents or occupational diseases have been unable to work. If after 12 months the person remains permanently impaired, the applicant may apply for a disability pension. The degree of disability is measured by a Medical Council in accordance with the table describing the degrees of disability which is included in the Social Insurance Law of 2010. A lump sum is provided for a degree of disability between 10 per cent and 19 per cent, while disability pensions are payable monthly for degrees of disability over 20 per cent.

228. The purpose of the Social Insurance legislation is the payment of cash benefits. The current situation could be improved by the cooperation with other Departments of the Ministry with the purpose of reintegration of beneficiaries into work. Data on the social benefits provided by Social Insurance Services in 2011 are shown below:

1. **Social Provision:** Invalidity Pension

   Actual Expenditure (2011): €53,479,266

   Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 6930

2. **Social Provision:** Disability Pension

   Actual Expenditure (2011): €5,105,616

   Number of Beneficiaries 2011: 1052

229. The **Electrical Authority of Cyprus** provides special domestic rating in electricity consumption for persons with severe motor disabilities, paraplegia or quadriplegia, and the **Cyprus Telecommunications Authority** offers packages of land line and mobile telephony and internet at discounted rates to persons with disabilities.

Article 29 – Participation in political and public life

230. Article 31 of the Constitution provides that all people of Cyprus have the right to vote and stand for election. However it is stated that every person with disability has the

right to be nominated at any stage provided that he / she has no intellectual disability in accordance with articles 40 and 64 of the Constitution. Individuals with other disabilities may be granted reasonable adjustment measures during the election period and during their tenure.

231. All individuals who have attained 18 years of age and are residents of Cyprus for a period of six months or more in accordance with the Registration of Voters and Electoral Register Law,[95] have the right to vote. Persons with disabilities may have reasonable adjustments when voting or accessibility measures or aid attendants.

232. Recognition is given to the fact that weaknesses appear on the matter of accessibility for persons with disabilities at polling centres. The effort of the competent bodies to alter them into being accessible just before the elections results in providing inadequate and sketchy accessibility solutions for persons with disabilities.

233. All persons with disabilities have the right to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations as well as organizations of persons with disabilities. In Cyprus there is a large number of voluntary organizations that are active in both fighting for the rights of persons with disabilities as well as offering various programmes.

Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

234. A large number of cultural, sports and recreational programmes and activities are provided by voluntary organizations of persons with disabilities. These organizations receive grants to operate their programmes mainly through the State Schemes of the **Social Welfare Services** and to a lesser extent by **the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and the Ministry of Education and Culture**.

235. Also the Financial Assistance to the Organizations of Persons with Disabilities for Hiring Social Assistants for their Members Scheme operated by the Department of Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities covers the needs of transportation and assistance to persons with disabilities to participate in cultural and recreational events.

236. With regard to children with disabilities, the educational psychologist encourages both teachers and parents of children in equal participation of children in cultural events, theatre and excursions organized by the school unit. The psychologist during the evaluation can sometimes become aware of a child's special talent e.g. singing or theatre. This finding, which emanates from the assessment of the child or from the interview with the child's parents, is discussed with the teachers and the school principal and a recommendation for the child to participate in the theatre, in the choir or in the orchestra if playing a musical instrument is given.

237. **The Cyprus Youth Organization**[96] through the European programme "Youth in Action" offers programmes and services, primarily informational and recreational, targeting persons with disabilities (dance workshops, painting and gymnastics).

238. In multiplex youth centres free evening dance workshops, sports events, music, painting and crafts are offered and they operate departments for persons with disabilities.

[95] District Administration Offices – Ministry of Interior
http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/da/dadmin.nsf/dmllegislation_gr/dmllegislation_gr?OpenDocument.

[96] Οργανισμός Νεολαίας http://www.youthboard.org.cy/default.asp?id=255.

Article 31 – Statistics and data collection

239. The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, as the Ministry responsible for the coordination of services that the State provides to persons with disabilities, recognized the shortage in Cyprus of a scientific, credible and reliable database for persons with disabilities. For the above reason it was found necessary to design a new assessment system, based on the scientific tool of the World Health Organization's ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health), which will lead, through professional assessment, documentation and classification of disability and functioning of the individual, including the creation of a comprehensive database of disability. **The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** is responsible for the implementation of this New System for the Assessment of Disability and Functioning.[97] Beyond the field of assessment, this new system will cover largely the need to maintain statistics on the types of disability that exist in Cyprus, the frequency of disability, the facilities needed and the services provided by the State.

240. **The Cyprus Statistic Services** (www.cystat.gov.cy) have collected data on disability only in the context of other surveys and censuses. Questions referred to disability have been included in the following surveys:

- Labour Force Survey 2011 — Section for Employment of People with Disabilities;
- European Health Survey 2008;
- Health Survey 2003;
- Labour Force Survey 2002 — Section for Persons with Long-term health problems or Disabilities;
- Health Survey 1989;
- Population Census 1992.

Labour Force Survey 2011 — Section for Employment of Persons with Disabilities

241. The section on "Employment of persons with disabilities" was part of the Labour Force Survey 2011, covering only the period between April and June 2011, i.e. the second quarter. The survey referred only to persons aged 15-64. The aim of this section was to describe the extent to which the individual is limited to work and the nature or kind of limitation.

European Health Survey 2008

242. The European Health Survey 2008 was conducted during the period September-December 2008, covering households in urban and rural areas of all Districts controlled by the area of Cyprus. The survey was conducted using a common questionnaire that was used by all the countries of the European Union. It was a sampled survey and covered only the population residing in households and the people who were permanent residents of Cyprus. Persons residing in institutions or other collective households were excluded. The survey results have been adapted to the actual proportions of the population. For this reason, there may be some differences in some units of the total sums. Questions on disability concerned people of 15 years of age and older and referred to physical and sensory limitations and the capacity to handle personal activities.

[97] Department for Social Inclusion o Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd06_gr/dsipd06_gr?OpenDocument

Health Survey 2003

243. The Health Survey was conducted in households from all Districts, both urban and rural areas controlled by the Government of Cyprus in the period September-December 2003. The survey was sampled and covered only the population residing in households and who were permanent residents of Cyprus. Persons residing in institutions or other collective households were excluded. The survey results have been adapted to the actual proportions of the population. For this reason, there may be some differences in some units of the total sums. Questions on disability concerned people of 15 years of age and older and referred to physical and sensory limitations and the capacity to handle personal activities.

Labour Force Survey 2002 — Section for Persons with Long-term health problems or disabilities

244. The section on People with Long Term Health Problems or Disability was part of the Labour Force Survey 2002, conducted for the first time in Cyprus, within the framework of implementing the regulation in the European Union. The survey covered a sample of 3,500 households in all districts of Cyprus, which were selected proportionately in urban and rural areas controlled by the Government of Cyprus. The aim of the specific section was to create a comprehensive database on the situation of persons with disabilities in the labour market, and to contribute in shaping European policy-based insights. This policy aims to increase the employment levels of persons with disabilities, helping them to be transferred from being dependent on welfare allowances to being in employment by removing various barriers in order to achieve full participation in the labour market. The section on long-term health problems or disabilities covered individuals aged 16-64 years of age which were included in the sample of the Labour Force Survey 2002.

Population Census 1992

245. In the questionnaire used for the 1992 Population Census there was a question on disability, based on which a list of persons with disabilities was created and communicated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance for further processing and utilization.

Article 32 – International cooperation

246. Cyprus participates in the Solidarity Fund for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and was among the first countries after the establishment of the fund that offered the amount of €5,160.

247. Representatives of Cyprus also participate in conferences, workshops and seminars organized either by the Commission or by the United Nations in relation to the Convention due to the fact that international cooperation is very useful for Cyprus, as a small country, helping to disseminate ideas and best practices for the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Article 33 – National implementation and monitoring

248. The Council of Ministers of Cyprus, by its decision on 9 May 2012 in relation to the application of article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, appointed the following mechanisms for effective implementation and monitoring of the Convention:

(a) The Department of Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities as a focal point for the implementation of the Convention, which cooperates with the contact points designated in all Ministries / Departments / Services that handle disability issues;

(b) The Pancyprian Council for Persons with Disabilities, which is supported by the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and operates within the framework of the Persons with Disabilities Law, 2000-2007 as the Coordinating Mechanism, to facilitate actions for the implementation of the Convention;

(c) The Office of the Ombudsman and Human Rights, which operates under the Paris Principals and the Law against Racial and Other Discriminations (Commissioner) L.42 (I) / 2004, as an Independent Mechanism for the promotion, protection and monitoring of the Convention under article 33 of L.8 (III)/2011.

249. **The Ombudsman and Human Rights — Equality Authority** as an independent mechanism has the authority to conduct investigations, to collect data to monitor the Convention and to examine cases of non-application of the Convention, consult the parties and impose penalties, submit reports to government agencies and stakeholders including private sector stakeholders with recommendations for the implementation of the Convention, cooperate with the Advisory Committee for Monitoring the Convention in which persons with disabilities and representatives of their organizations participate, cooperate with the Coordinating Mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan on Disability.

250. To achieve the formulation of a National Disability Action Plan in Cyprus the establishment of 8 Thematic Technical Committees, was considered necessary within the operation of the Coordinating Mechanism, which have the role of coordinating all relevant departments and proposing actions to implement the Convention. The eight Thematic Technical Committees are:

(1) Thematic Technical Committee on Equality, Non-discrimination, Awareness and Statistics;

(2) Thematic Technical Committee on Accessibility in the Physical and Built Environment;

(3) Thematic Technical Committee on Accessibility in Transportation;

(4) Thematic Technical Committee on Accessibility to Information;

(5) Thematic Technical Committee on Independent Living, Social Inclusion, Mobility and Social Protection;

(6) Thematic Technical Committee on Education and Vocational Training;

(7) Thematic Technical Committee on Health and Rehabilitation;

(8) Thematic Technical Committee on Employment.

251. The Cyprus Confederation of Organizations of the Disabled (CCOD), which is the umbrella for organizations of persons with disability in Cyprus and the official social partner of the State on disability issues, by law, is represented on the Coordinating Mechanism and cooperates through institutionalized channels of communication and consultation with both the focal point and the Independent Mechanism.

252. In Cyprus, The Consultation Process between the Government and other Services for Issues concerning Persons with Disabilities Law of 2006 (L.143 (I) / 2006), obliges every public service, to consult the CCOD before taking any decision on issues concerning persons with disabilities.

253. Representatives of the CCOD participated in all eight Thematic Technical Committees for the preparation of the National Report and National Action Plan on Disability of Cyprus.

Article 34 – Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities

254. Persons with disabilities in Cyprus have the ability to be informed on their right to appeal in the event that their human rights are violated at the Independent Monitoring Mechanism of the Convention and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Optional Protocol of the Convention has also been ratified by Cyprus along with the Convention and is publicized through the website of the focal point.